

A  
P I C T U R E  
OF  
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

*By* ROBERT FELLOWES, *A. B. Oxon.*

THE THIRD EDITION,  
WITH CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

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Certainly it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in Charity,  
rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of Truth.

LORD BACON.

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P R E F A C E  
TO THE FIRST EDITION.

A PRINCIPAL design of the present publication is, by a delineation of the character of Jesus, to display the genuine unsophisticated spirit of his religion; and to shew what ought to be it's influence on the affections and the conduct of men in private life and in public stations. Some philosophers of our times have recommended a spirit of universal philanthropy, to the extinction of all local and individual partialities \*. I have endeavoured

\* Among the most singular of these is Mr. Godwin, author of an elaborate work, called "Political Justice." Mr. G. certainly possesses great vigour of mind; but how often does he become a mere dreamer of dreams, and a compounder of absurdities! His system is totally impracti-

what were the doctrines, and what was the practice of Jesus; which may easily be collected from the accounts which the Evangelists have left us of his actions and his discourses; and according to these we ought, as much as possible, to regulate our doctrine, our affections and our practice. The doctrines of Jesus, as they have been delivered by the Evangelists, are plain and simple to all capacities; but the epistles, filled with allusions to evanescent topics, and to schisms which no longer disturb the church, are involved in a tenfold obscurity, in which even sagacity and learning will be for ever bewildered. Why then, when we can walk in the light, should we prefer stumbling in darkness? Is it because we delight more in error than in truth? or because we imagine that there is no piety, where there is no mystery?

Another cause which has greatly contributed to obscure the true genius of the Christian system, is, that the majority of those who

have set themselves down to the study of the subject, have rather endeavoured to make Christianity conform to their opinions, than make their opinions conform to Christianity. Slaves to some darling theory or some early prepossessions, they have rather sought for texts to confirm these, than to elucidate the truth by rational and dispassionate inquiry.

This is a principal reason why we have so many schemes of Christianity, and so many sects of Christians. Individuals, instead of endeavouring to discover the truth, as it is in Jesus, have endeavoured to pervert it, to their own narrow prejudices and partial views. But I trust that we have arrived at an age, when the inquirers into the doctrines of revelation, no longer blinded by the obstinacy of bigotry, or the credulity of superstition, will cheerfully relinquish error to embrace truth; and will be less directed by vanity than by love to God and to mankind. Had the evidences and tenets of the Christian religion

been constantly investigated with these affections, and with no other bias than a bias to benevolence, Skepticism could never have prevailed so much in the world; there would have been less bitterness and discordancy among believers; and infidelity would, at least, have wanted one subject of triumph, in the implacable animosities of Christians against Christians.

It is an absurd and a dangerous notion, that we can serve the cause of revelation by limiting the right of free discussion, or checking it by persecution. Persecution always increases the evil it is intended to remedy; and religious opinions, which respect the intercourse between man and his maker, ought for ever to be free from human interruption. They are too sacred for the cognizance of any earthly tribunal.

There seems to be a principle in human nature, ever jealous of the least usurpation on

the right of private judgment, particularly in religious concerns; and which, though it often seems irregular and capricious in its operations, was yet providently planted in us, by divine wisdom, as a strong auxiliary to truth, and a counteracting cause of tyranny and persecution. Had not mankind possessed this principle of counteraction, Christianity, when the miraculous effusions of the Holy Spirit had ceased, might have sunk lifeless and exhausted under successive persecutions. Truths, the most useful to mankind, which have commonly been attacked at their first appearance, by bigotry or by malice, might have perished as soon as they were born, and the moral and the intellectual world might have been covered with darkness. It was this principle which animated Luther and the early reformers, and shook the solid and artfully cemented fabric of Popery to its base. It is this principle, which arming the conscience and the reason of man with an energy, proportionate to the fury that opposes



their free exercise, has so often caused the diffusion of opinions, to keep pace with the rage that has struggled for their suppression.

As it is the collision of mind with mind, that discovers new truths and elucidates old, Christians ought by no means to discourage the discussion of the evidences of their religion. They ought rather to court such discussion, and engage in it themselves, without any of that spirit of bitterness, which often disgraces even the advocates of a good cause, and degrades the investigation of sacred truths into a petty personal contention.

Truth should be sought for truth's sake; not for the pleasure of exposing an adversary, or for the glory of victory, but for the sake of diminishing error and of diffusing knowledge. And surely the truths of Christianity, of all others, ought not to be discussed with rancour, but in the mild spirit of him from whom they came. The Christian ought to



answer argument by argument, and not to seek the energies of logic in the vindictiveness of persecution. Let the believer and the unbeliever know, that Christianity can stand by argument; that it can derive no strength from rage and persecution; and that, that only deserves the name of faith which is founded on sober and rational conviction.

It is full time that the evil spirit of persecution should be laid at rest for ever. After the experience of eighteen centuries, it is time that mankind should at last be convinced, that opinions, if true, can never be vanquished by oppression, and if false, many a melancholy page in history might have taught us, that human errors yield more certainly to mildness than to rage, to reason than to punishment\*.

\* When a political system is getting into disrepute, there seems to me to be but one way to retrieve it's character and to maintain it's authority; and that is, by making the people in general feel the happiness it produces, and their interest in supporting it.

Christian charity should incline us to forbearance towards each other; christian humility ought long ago to have instructed mankind, that those who claim the right of persecuting others for their opinions, are themselves as fallible as those they persecute. Let us have done with that vehement, dogmatizing, intolerant and sanguinary spirit, which

When the benevolent Count Rumford undertook to reform the moral sentiments of the Bavarian beggars, he first rendered them easy and comfortable in their circumstances. A man is never so much averse to morality as when he is starving with hunger. That distress which is irretrievable breaks the spirit of independence, the source of honest and virtuous endeavour, and produces the lowest state of moral degradation. In this abject state, the individual, ceasing to perceive the blessings of civil order, grows impatient of its restraints and anxious for its dissolution. He becomes fit for all kinds of atrocities! If easy circumstances do not always produce morality, they are, at least, most favourable to its production; for he who is in a state of wretchedness, approaching to despair, can hardly fail of being hostile to those laws of political justice, which constitute the individuality of property, and which are the strong base of social morality, and the sacred cement of civil government. No revolution could possibly take place in that country, where every individual was interested in the preservation of civil order; or, in other words, was attached by a reciprocal inte-

in former ages burned it's victims in the flames; and which, in the present, has opened far and wide the sluices of human gore, and filled the earth with spectacles of misery!!!

The times themselves, by their awful and tremendous aspect, portending the wrath of heaven on our presumption, our animosity

rest, to the practice of the duties of reciprocal justice. The governors of mankind cannot give too much attention to this principle, if they wish to identify their own power with the interests and the affections of the people, and to unite all the gradations of civil society, by the connecting bond of a sympathetic benevolence.

A communion of happiness is not only not incompatible with a disparity of property, but is inattainable without it. The greatest happiness which mankind can enjoy on earth, arises from a benevolent intercourse with each other. Were all men equal in circumstances, there would be no room for a reciprocity of kindnesses. A disparity of conditions occasions a disparity of wants, and gives rise to most of the affections which gladden life. The complicated and diversified circumstances of mankind warm into life and stimulate into action those benevolent sympathies which are the ornaments of our species, and the prolific causes of a reciprocity of happiness. Without them we should be absorbed in a brutal selfishness, and acquainted with none but the lowest animal enjoyments.

and our crimes, ought to induce us to return to a system of reciprocal benevolence and moderation. To suffer a mere difference of opinion to make us as hostile to each other, as if we were beings of a different species, appears a strange mockery of the religion we profess; whose features are mildness, and whose precepts are love.

Were the desolating animosity, which at this moment separates from each other states and individuals, to be perpetual, even a righteous man might be almost tempted to loath existence! But let us hope, that these days, dark and dismal as they now appear, will be shortened by the All-wise and All-good Dispenser of individual and of national felicity. Though at this moment the world be teeming with revolutions, though thrones be tottering to their fall, though changes the most important have happened so rapidly, that they almost appear as the visions of a dream, let us, with calm resignation, trust that the Divine

Providence is busily employed in this solemn drama; arranging all it's parts on the wisest plans, and disposing them, notwithstanding the gloomy sadness of intermediate disorders, for a conclusion, favourable to virtue, to piety and to happiness.

HARBURY,  
April 3, 1798.



Providence is daily employed in this solemn drama; arranging all its parts on the wisest plans, and disposing them notwithstanding the gloomy shades of intermediate disorders for a conclusion favourable to virtue, to piety and to happiness.

HARVARD,  
April 3, 1798.



( 1711 )

P R E F A C E

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

**T**HE favourable reception of the first edition of this work, has encouraged the author to publish the present, enlarged, and he hopes, improved edition. The manner, in which he has treated the most important of all subjects, has, he trusts, however displeasing it may have been to some few individuals, been generally approved.

The lovers of bitterness, the fomenters of animosity, and the champions of intolerance will take no pleasure in the following pages; but the author hopes, that the friends of revealed truth and of human happiness will not have occasion to regret either the expence of the publication, or the time it may employ.

The author is not the timid or obsequious votary of any party. He has not been scrupulously delicate about adjusting his opinions to the standard of fashion; careless of personal favour or emolument, he has sedulously fought for truth in the sanctuary of the scriptures. Instead of tuning the harmony of his notions to the breath of every fleeting interest; he has endeavoured, with unfeigned sincerity, to direct the steps of his fellow creatures, by the torch of Christian love, to life eternal. If by the grace of Divine Providence, without which the author has an undoubting conviction that *all his exertions must be fruitless*, he is made the instrument of spreading the unfulled light of the true gospel, or of exciting the flame of genuine benevolence in only one individual, he will feel a happiness which wealth could not give, and which poverty cannot take away.

ROBERT FELLOWES,

*Curate of Harbury, near Southam, Warwickshire.*

February 15, 1799.

( 22 )

**P R E F A C E**  
**TO THE THIRD EDITION.**

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**I** CANNOT suffer the third edition of this work to go into the world, without expressing my gratitude for the encouragement which it has received. It has indeed been opposed \*

\* I shall here say a few words on the fashionable (shall I call it orthodox?) practice of stigmatizing many sincere believers by the cant appellation of "Nominal Christians,"—a mode of phraseology very usual with Mr. Wilberforce and the Christians of his school. They call every man a "Nominal Christian," who will not yield an unconditional assent to their unscriptural decrees, or who cannot ascend to the height of their visionary raptures. But it appears to me, that he, and he only, can justly be called a "mere professing and nominal Christian," who wants the spirit of Christ; and I think that these pages will fully evince the spirit of Christ to have been a spirit of benevolence. Whoever, therefore, (of whatever sect he may be, whether a Trinitarian, an Arian, or Socinian; a Papist, or a Church-

with vehemence, and reviled with bitterness, by those, who think that the only way to heaven lies through the dark passages of mystic divinity; but it has met with the kind applause and the vigorous support of others of all sects and parties, and of every rank and condition in society\*.

In these pages I have combated the two

man; a Presbyterian, Independent, or Methodist) is wanting in that spirit of benevolence, which, *more than any thing else*, designates the true Christian, deserves the opprobrious name of "Nominal Christian."

\* My reason for mingling some miscellaneous matter in the notes, was a wish to relieve the attention and to increase the interest. I was desirous of producing a treatise on religion, that might be read with pleasure not only by Christians, but which might attract even Infidels to peruse it, and to peruse it, *under the influence of pleasurable sensation*. For I am well assured, that on such occasions, pleasurable sensation exerts some power even on the conviction of the understanding, and more on the persuasion of the heart.— This may be called metaphysical refinement, but I have found it practically just; and happy, thrice happy am I to inform the reader, that the perusal of this work has been the humble means of bringing back to the fold of Christ, some who had gone astray in the wilds of skepticism.

foes from whom Christianity has most to dread;—infidelity on the one side, and fanaticism\* on the other. The first is to be re-

\* On “fanaticism,” an apparently increasing evil in the present day, I shall here say a few words, and shall shew how it differs from “enthusiasm,” with which it is often confounded.

Fanaticism denotes a state of mind, in which there is not only a violent predilection for some particular opinions, but a rooted abhorrence of the contrary. Thus intolerance is the prominent characteristic of fanaticism. An enthusiast is seldom intolerant; a fanatic never tolerant. Fanaticism naturally produces selfishness of disposition; enthusiasm is more marked by loftiness of mind. An enthusiast is always sincere; but fanaticism is not incompatible with the greatest knavery. A fanatic is usually fond of money; prompted by covetousness, he scruples neither falsehood nor extortion to serve his ends, *secretly living for nothing but time, and openly talking of nothing but eternity.* An enthusiast, on the contrary, *really absorbed* in higher speculations, lives not to the world; and regards not the accumulation of perishable riches. A man of the lowest capacity, of the most contemptible talents, and the most vitiated sentiments, *may be* a fanatic; but it requires a certain degree of sublimity of mind as well as of feeling, to constitute an enthusiast. Fanaticism depresses the brow, and casts a shade of malign solemnity over the countenance, but enthusiasm often promotes and never sullenly obstructs the flow of social hilarity. Enthusiasm often expands, sublimes, and vivifies the most generous qualities of our nature; while fanaticism



sisted, as an enemy to any Christianity whatever; the last, as it endeavours to extirpate that species of it, which is best worth preserving; I mean reasonable, pure, beneficent Christianity; that Christianity which is friend-

freezes all the melting sensibilities of the heart; blights all that is amiable, and brings to maturity all that is loathsome and disgusting. Enthusiasm is always allied to virtue; fanaticism is always incorporated with vice.

The distinguishing and characteristic features of fanaticism are these; intolerance, selfishness, a driveling imbecility of mind, and a savage hardness of heart; impermeability to reason, invincibility to conviction, sometimes, but *rarely*, associated with a *faint* glimmering perception of utility, or sincerity, but *more often*, intimately blended with *hypocrisy and imposture*. The distinguishing features of enthusiasm are these; intense volition taking a particular direction, associated with magnanimity, and, as it were, a grandeur of feeling, pliant to sympathy, impelled powerfully by sensation, but little governed by discretion, incapable of fraud, of injustice, and hypocrisy. The reader will observe, that, in this note, I mean solely to characterise fanaticism and enthusiasm as connected with religion, though part of the description would suit fanaticism and enthusiasm of other kinds. If I should have health to finish a large and comprehensive work which I meditate on the Christian religion, I shall prosecute a close, metaphysical inquiry into the nature of fanaticism; and, at the same time, give an historical detail of it's effects.



ly to the free and genial exercise of all the faculties of the mind, and which excites, warms, and cherishes all the benevolent and heaven-born affections of the heart.

Though I have not been fiercely zealous to inculcate all the great points of difference, or curiously nice to mark all the evanescent lines of distinction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, I trust that the religious tenets, contained in this work, are the tenets of a great majority of the existing ministers of the Church of England; and I can prove, and will prove, if it shall be necessary, that they always have been the tenets of the most enlightened members of that Church, at every period since the reformation. I feel moreover an animated consciousness, which no man can take from me, that the principles which are so often extolled in these pages, will stand their ground and make their way against the united opposition of infidels and of bigots. Had this work been prompted by no higher views than

those of interested expectation, I should have given a very different complexion to it's sentiments and it's doctrines. Instead of maintaining that salvation does not belong, exclusively, to one sect of Christians, more than to another, I should have hurled the firebrands of religious rage against the whole Christian fraternity, who refused to say "Amen" to every damnatory clause of the Athanasian creed; for I know, while I lament, that in the temper of the present times, ten pages of print high-coloured with intolerance, and saturated with anathemas, stand a better chance of a temporal reward, than ten volumes which breathe nothing but the artless fervours of universal charity. Though I wish well to the Church-establishment, though I have strenuously supported, and will continue strenuously to support it\*, yet I will never prostitute my pen in the defence of an intolerant and fanatic party in the Church of England,

\* The author's unremitting toils in the parish of which he is curate, his "Morality united with Policy," his Anti-

or in any other Church in Christendom. As a faithful minister of the gospel of truth, I cannot, and I ought not, with a dogmatizing spirit, to insist on dubious points of theology, which tend not unto the use of edifying, and *which Christ himself never inculcated as essential to salvation.* If the kind, the gentle, and useful virtues which are here most commended, have little affinity with worldly distinction, or with temporal emolument, I trust that they will lead him, who cherishes them in his heart, and practises them in his life, to "an inheritance incorruptible, and that passeth not away." Spirits of holy Christians, who are numbered among the silent dead! ye who begun your course in difficulties, persevered in it with courage, and finished it with glory, may it be my lot,

Calvinist\*, and other published and unpublished writings, will fully demonstrate this.

\* A little cheap tract, called the "Anti-Calvinist, or a plain discourse on the redemption of man by Christ Jesus," and written to counteract the machinations of the pretended evangelical or gospel preachers.

as it has been yours, after having preached  
Christ on earth, to pass into the communion  
of the just in heaven !

ROBERT FELLOWES,

*Curate of Harbury, near Southam, Warwickshire.*

May 6, 1800.

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## ERRATA

IN THE THIRD EDITION.

Page.	line.	
18	9,	for "was," read "were."
20	24,	for "seems," read "he seems."
323	9,	for "man," read "than."
182	18 and 19,	for "the brightness of it's glory," read "it's brightness."

## A PICTURE OF

## CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

*The character of Jesus, as it has been represented by  
the four Evangelists, an argument for the truth  
of Christianity.*

THE character of Jesus, as it has been drawn by the Evangelists, affords a strong presumptive proof of the truth of Christianity. The features of it are so striking, and yet so consistent with each other, that it seems absurd, at first sight, to suppose it a fiction;—and a fiction of a few peasants and fishermen. Even the friends to infidelity must allow it to be the most singular character that is to be found in the annals of the world: and it's singularity does not arise so much from it's particular dissimilitude to others, as from it's superiority, in all particulars, to every character of which history has made any mention.

in any age. The writers of romance never even feigned a character so perfect and excellent. It was beyond the virtue of mortality to equal, and the wit of mortals to imagine.

The difficulty of giving harmony and consistency to a feigned character, and to one placed in extraordinary circumstances, and represented as possessing extraordinary powers, will be acknowledged by all who ever made the essay in works of imagination.

The character of Jesus is not drawn by the Evangelists in the broad lines of vulgar panegyric; but in the artless and simple touches of a delicate pencil. His praises are not founded in our ears. His virtues are not particularised; they are not even named; but they are more strongly imprinted in our minds, than if they had been lauded a thousand times in all the splendour of eloquence, by the discourses, the incidents and the actions of his life. And all these discourses, incidents and actions, supposing them a fiction, must have been most artfully and ably managed indeed! They are all made so aptly to combine, as to represent the most perfect unity and identity of character.

If, therefore, the Evangelists did not paint from life; if they have related discourses which were



never delivered, incidents which never happened, features of character and shades of manners which they never beheld, they must have been, though confessedly without taste or literature, men of the most exquisite taste and discernment which were ever known. Had they no original before them, they have described an imagined resemblance most artfully, and yet most inartificially.

But can any candid examiner believe, that the Evangelists have painted a non-existence? will he not rather allow that they have delineated the discourses, actions and manners of Jesus, such as they were, and such as they witnessed them to be, in the language of candour, of truth and simplicity?

We are, besides, to consider—that the character of Jesus is not drawn by one person only; but by four different hands; all of whom, palpably, describe the same original. In particular circumstances, and, as it were, shades of their narration, they differ; but, amid a diversity of circumstances, they do not exhibit the least cast of a diversity of character.

This consideration is of great importance; because, had they been describing a fictitious character only, it is more than probable, that their differences would have destroyed the ap-

pearance of it's individuality and identity. But, at present, these differences take no more from the individual likeness, than if several painters should represent the same identic features, and only differ in a few minute folds or ornaments of the drapery.

The Evangelists preserve a perfect consistency and uniformity of character, amid a multitude of petty variations; and which variations only prove, that they did not write in concert; but that, like honest men, they delivered the truth, and nothing but the truth, to the best of their knowledge and conviction. But had they painted a non-existence, they must have written in concert: for several persons can never be supposed to have imagined a similar fiction, without the most glaring discordancies \*. And, supposing that the

\* In the relation of the same fact, by different individuals, it will always happen that some particulars will be mentioned by one, which are omitted by another; and "*vice versa*." But this is not sufficient to shake the credibility of any narrative whatever. Were any one, at this moment, to fall down before my door and break his leg, and were twelve persons present, it is more than probable that all the twelve would relate the same fact in a somewhat different way. They would differ in some minute and incidental circumstances; but they would all agree, without the least variation, that the man broke his leg.

No one can have been much present in courts of justice without observing the incidental variations that are constantly occurring in the testimony of even honest and credible wit-

Evangelists did write in concert, how are we to account for the particular dissimilitudes which are visible in their narration?

It may be said, that by an excess of refinement in fraud, such dissimilitudes were the effect of collusion; but this collusion, of which there is not the least appearance, must be proved, before it can be believed\*; and, could it be proved, it would render the Evangelists, in whom we cannot trace the least talents for imposture, the ablest

nesses. In the narrative of the resurrection, by the four Evangelists, their several variations may be considered either under the head of omissions or additions; or as indistinct discriminations of the precise order of time, in which the incidental circumstances or ramifications of the same event took place. It is by no means uncommon for historians, either for the sake of a more lucid arrangement of their subject, or of placing some great event in a stronger light; to invert the natural order of some minute, immaterial and associated occurrences, and to place them in an order different from their literal, arithmetical and chronological series. It is by no means improbable, that the Evangelists, in recording the resurrection, neglected some of the least fractions of chronology. Hence there may arise some apparent confusion in their several relations.

\* There is reason to believe that neither Matthew, Mark, nor Luke had seen each other's gospels, at the time of writing their own. John seems to have written with a view to supply the omissions of the former Evangelists; and particularly to give us a farther insight into the nature of Christ's mission, and of his union with and dependance on the Father, than

impostors that ever conquered the credulity of mankind.

Which ever way the advocates for infidelity attempt to get rid of that argument for the truth of Christianity, which is supplied by a candid examination of the character of Jesus, they will, I am persuaded, find themselves involved in contradictions and absurdities; from which there is no escape, but by allowing the integrity of the relators and the truth of the relation,

Admitting the truth of the relation, the truth of the miraculous powers ascribed to Jesus, and the truth of the Christian religion follow of course: but there are many Deists, who, though they do not reject the whole account of the discourses, incidents and actions of Jesus, are yet only willing to admit it, as an heterogeneous mixture of truth and fiction; and, consequently, according to whom, the character of Jesus must have been, in part, taken from life, and, in part, from imagination.

For a moment, allowing this supposition, how they had done. Hence, in considering the question of Christ's divinity, we should pay particular attention to St. John's gospel; as that is more full and satisfactory on the subject than the gospels of the other Evangelists.

are we to draw the line where the truth ends and the falsehood begins? All the discourses and actions of Jesus, which are recorded in the gospels, are intimately cemented together;—not by a connexion of place, or by a continued chain of subordinate causation,—but by a certain peculiarity of character; which cannot escape the notice of the diligent examiner; but which hardly admits of a definition, through the imperfections of language \*. By this peculiarity they are, if I

\* This peculiarity of character, is a good deal connected with the impressiveness, the majesty, and, at the same time, the genuine, unaffected, simplicity of the manner; (on which I have spoken more at large in the next chapter;) but this is not all; and language is as inadequate to catch all the fleeting and intermingling tints and combinations of sensation, as it is to delineate all the tints and combinations of nature's ever-varying forms.—On it's inadequacy, as it relates to picturesque description, a subject which has lately been so much in fashion, I will say a few words.

Nature is characterised by diversity. In every landscape or view, with which she is adorned, though there may be a general cast of resemblance, yet there is always a great variety in the colouring—in the intermixture of light and shade—in the forms of particular objects, and their several combinations. But try to transfuse an exact likeness of these things into the artificial net-work of language; and you will soon discover that the terms of taste are not sufficiently copious or precise to express all the diversified sensations of beauty; and that the vocabulary of admiration is so jejune, that it is soon worn thread-bare.—Even the picturesque descriptions of Mrs. Radcliffe, though combined with all the exquisite taste of genius,



may so express it, so completely identified with themselves, and with each other, that it is impossible to mark the separation between the genuine

and mellowed by the blush of sentiment, soon tire upon the ear and pall upon the sense.

In language, we may paint the general forms of rocks, woods, rivers, mountains and vallies, precipices, cataracts and torrents, and may group these several objects together, so as to give a faint resemblance of Nature's scenes; but it is impossible to hit, as it were, that versatility of touch, which she every where employs; and which prevents the forms of any two objects, however similar, from being the same. Hence we are soon wearied with that monotonous uniformity, which pervades the descriptions of picturesque travellers; though we should have experienced neither languor nor satiety in viewing the original scenes. In nature, every thing is infinitely diversified; but the variety of her dresses, her shapes, her combinations eludes the most subtle machinations of the genius of language.

In language, we have no other means of characterising the individuals of a species of objects, than by the use of epithets. —But the stock of epithets, —I do not mean, of those vacant sounds, which are used merely for the purpose of harmonising periods (a purpose, to which they are so copiously applied by modern writers), but of those epithets, which have a definite signification, and which excite distinct ideas, the stock is scanty indeed; and very inadequate to show that particularity, and, as it were, individuality, which is Nature's impress on every one of her works. By epithets, we can express a few general ideas of magnitude, of form and colour; but we can specify only a very slender portion of that variety of magnitudes, of forms and tints which *An Un-seen but Well-known Hand* has scattered, with a sort of careless profusion, through the whole expanse of creation.

and the fictitious history. If we allow the discourses of Jesus to be genuine, and yet his miracles to be false, we shall not escape the greatest embarrassinent. For the discourses assert the miracles; and the miracles confirm the discourses. Take away the genuineness of the one, and you destroy the genuineness of the other. We must either allow, that the discourses and the miracles are both genuine, or both fictitious. If we adopt the latter supposition, we shall still be involved in those inconsistencies which I have mentioned above.

Again—if we suppose that the discourses of Jesus are a mixture of truth and fiction, of what Jesus really spoke, and what the Evangelists imagined; still it will be impossible to distinguish where the first ends, and the last begins: for, in all the numerous discourses which the Evangelists have ascribed to Jesus, there is, without an identity of sense or of expression, an identity of manner, of style and character. No man, of the least acuteness, can read the gospels without being convinced of this. But this identity of manner, of style and character, in the discourses, seems almost impossible to be reconciled with the supposition of their being a combination of truth and fiction; for falsehood never could have been patched upon truth, and particularly by different hands, and in such a variety of

instances, without the point of their conjunction being very perceptible. A modern architect, might, with more probability of success, attempt to restore the remains of an ancient pile of Grecian simplicity, or of Gothic exuberance\*,

\* It is surprising how the artists of the middle ages could communicate such lightness to such massy fabrics;—how they could insinuate that airy, waving grace, which is seen in their immense ramifications of stone, which, growing from massy columnar trunks, form a shady, solemn avenue from one part to another of their religious buildings! How did they turn their beautiful arches and raise their heaven-shooting spires? In every thing else, they seem to have been deficient in the first principles of taste; but in architecture they rivalled the excellence of Greece; if not in symmetry of proportions, at least in grandeur of design, in strength of execution, in fertility of invention, and in variety of decoration. The reason seems to be, that, in architecture, they followed nature, and looked into nature's book, for bold and masterly conceptions; in architecture, they disclaimed all priestcraft or prescription—while, in every thing else, they were the stupid slaves of bigotry and superstition.

The Ancient Goths used to worship the Deity in groves and woods; and, perhaps, sometimes in those immense caverns, which are occasionally formed by nature among the rocks. When, in the progress of civilization, they left their woods and caves, and began to erect artificial churches—they imitated in stone, the shade, ramifications and solemnity of their woods, groves and caves. The doors, or arches, which led to their places of worship, they decorated with a profusion of foliage and tendrils; which, with a sort of negligent wildness, spread over the way.—This was either intended to represent the entrance to a cavern, about which are scattered

so that the most diligent and curious observer could not discern the difference between the old work and the new.

The features of truth, can seldom be brought into such an intimate, and, as it were, impalpable and invisible union with those of falsehood, as that the latter shall be entirely concealed. And yet this extreme improbability must have happened, on the supposition—that the discourses of Jesus are a mass of truth and fiction.

Allowing the genuineness of the discourses, the truth of the miracles is a necessary deduction. In the discourses, there is a frequent assumption of miraculous powers, and a presumption of their notoriety. On these powers, Jesus solely and exclusively rests the truth of his mission. How would any person, of superior good sense and discernment, as even the enemies to Jesus must allow him to

a profusion of shrubs, vines or wildflowers; or the opening into a wood, formed by the opposite trees, intertwining with each other.

The great west entrance into Litchfield cathedral is remarkably beautiful; in the middle arises the trunk of a tree, exactly delineated; and which, by an expansion of its branches, on each side, forms a passage through two arches;—whence the whole avenue of columns, with their spreading ramifications towards each other, and along the roof, forms a perspective, which stays attention by its grandeur and its beauty.

have been, have falsely arrogated the possession of such powers? Would he have rested his whole claim to veracity on a groundless assertion? Would he have disgraced himself by a falsehood, of which, every peasant in Israel could have convicted him?

It will be no easy matter to solve these difficulties, which I have stated, without allowing that Jesus delivered those discourses which the Evangelists have ascribed to him; and wrought those miracles, with which they are so frequently associated.



( 14 )

A PICTURE OF  
**CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.**

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*Considerations on the marks of energy and authority that characterised the manner of Jesus; and, of which, the features are accurately preserved in the narrative of the Evangelists.*

ST. Matthew tells us (vii. 28) that when Jesus had finished his sermon on the mount—"the people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

The authoritative manner of Jesus, is distinctly seen through the whole of the Sermon. He appears rather like a king pronouncing his decrees, and invested with power to enforce their observance, than as an humble peasant, without friends or power. The contrast, between the

manner of the speaker and his circumstances, is very remarkable; and is a strong proof, that he was no impostor.

Imposture is usually obsequious and insinuating when in weakness; presumptuous and overbearing when in power. In the former state it flatters and caresses the passions of others; in the latter it gratifies it's own.

Now,—were Jesus an impostor, he must have possessed a degree of arrogance, unusual even to such men; and he must have attained the very difficult art of giving it that air which commands attention and respect, rather than that which, particularly when assumed in circumstances of inferiority and indigence, provokes aversion and disdain.

Emotions of respect, seldom fail to be excited by that genuine authority, of which, an inward consciousness appears in the outward aspect; while contempt is the usual consequence of a supercilious temerity; which blusters, and apes the gesture of strength, to disguise it's impotence.

Genuine authority, whenever it is visible in the manner, soon transfuses it's influence into the breasts of the beholder; it is formed to excite

mingled sensations of affection, of esteem and reverence; while assumed and factitious authority, which is justly named arrogance, is calculated to produce no other emotions than those of contempt and ridicule.

Genuine authority, often possesses a force greater than that of physical power\*; and the former, by a mere look or gesture, will, sometimes, counteract the strength of the latter—or, at least for a moment, palsy it's action.

Cæsar seems to have thought his power weak, till he could strengthen it by the authority of Cicero. The usurper wisely discriminated between moral and physical force; he was therefore anxious to associate the terror of his arms, with the respect which was attached to the virtue and the genius of Tully. Cicero, considered abstractedly as an individual, was of no importance; but, the authority he had obtained, and of which the influence was combined with

\* The true distinction between power and authority, as far as they are subjects of political consideration, is this—

“ Power is physical force; acts by mechanical impulsion, and operates on the will by the fears: but authority is rather a moral force; which rules at pleasure the voluntary powers, by it's fascinating sway over the affections and the heart.”  
*See sermons to the “ Friends of Peace.” 12mo. Vol. 57. White.*

his very name, gave a sanction to any cause and any party he espoused.

Louis the XVI. the last and the best of the French monarchs, was never greater than in his misfortunes. Stripped of physical power, he seemed great by the power of authority. When summoned before the barbarous tribunal, which condemned him to an undeserved death, the majesty of authority had survived the wreck of the majesty of power. The manner of Louis, which was characterised by true greatness, seems to have inspired sensations of reverence, even in the breasts of his ferocious accusers.

But, without that splendour of eloquence, which in Tully captivated applause, or that splendour of station, which, in Louis, dazzled the beholder, even in it's setting ray, there seems to have been, in Jesus, an air of authority, at once impressive and venerable. This made him command respect in the garb of distress; and breathed around him a reverential awe of majesty, in circumstances, in which any common mortal would have been passed by with silent pity, or viewed with scoffing insolence.

The manner of Jesus, stamped with the genuine impress of an energy more than human,

the Evangelists have delineated with the greatest simplicity, and without the least show of art.

In all the discourses, which the Evangelists have attributed to Jesus, there are evident traces of the dignity of the speaker\*. His august and impressive mien, is preserved without much fulness of colouring, but with great delicacy of tint and precision of outline, in the four portraits of Jesus, which have been drawn by the four Evangelists.

The same features are curiously kept, though in many different attitudes; and the same manner is observed, with inimitable skill, in a great diversity of incidents and sayings.

\* A striking instance of the impressive and authoritative manner of Jesus, may be seen in his invective against the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. The reader should peruse the whole chapter with attention. It shews the energy, the animation and the pathos which Jesus could combine on proper occasions.

In the viith and xth chapters of John, there are many delicate and lively traits of that peculiarly-impressive manner, which made the peasant of Galilee, "who had not where to lay his head," appear as "one having authority." The last discourses of Jesus to his disciples, detailed in John xiii. xiv. xv. xvi. are particularly deserving of attention. They are very descriptive of the manner of Jesus.—I earnestly recommend what I have said on this subject to the calm and candid consideration of the author of the "Age of Reason" and his followers.



The manner of Jesus must certainly have been noticed by the Jews, as an extraordinary trait in his character, and must have been regarded with some emotions of reverence, or they would not have said of him, that "he spoke as one having authority." The Evangelists have, in their several histories, marked, with singular nicety, the meekness, yet the energy, the earnestness, the sincerity, and the air of conscious importance, which was observed in all that Jesus uttered. These combined qualities—the associates of genuine authority, commanded the respect of the beholder; and excited sensations, which artificial greatness in vain strives to emulate.

On this occasion, in perusing the Evangelical history, we cannot help being struck with the apparent incongruity between the grandeur of the authoritative manner of Jesus, and the meanness of his circumstances.

Whence could the Galilean peasant have derived the impressiveness of his manner? Whence could the sayings of a poor, unfriended and houseless wanderer, have commanded as much attention as if they had come from one who had the sway of empires?

In the actual circumstances of Jesus (supposing him not to have possessed the divine powers

which are ascribed to him), it must have been difficult, indeed impossible, for him to have preserved, in his whole deportment, in every word, in every gesture, all of which were exposed to a severe and malicious scrutiny—the air of majesty and the impression of authority.

If Jesus had been an impostor, and with no appendages of artificial grandeur, no recommendations of external power, his very assumption of the tones of authority, instead of exalting, must have degraded him in the eyes of the people. Instead of commanding attention, he would have provoked laughter. The multitude are led entirely by appearances; and they never associate ideas of respect with the image of penury and of wretchedness.

The great, and seemingly irreconcilable, disparity between the manner of Christ and his condition, would certainly have excited contempt and ridicule, rather than those emotions of seriousness and awe, which genuine authority inspires; if the meanness of his condition had not disappeared in the real, not the affected dignity of his manner.

What he spoke commanded attention, because it was spoken with genuine dignity; and because the marks of a superior energy were seen trans-

luculent in Jesus, through the veil of humiliating indigence. It was this that made even the most inveterate Jews, at times, listen to him with silence and wonder. It was the manner of his sayings and the air of authority, with which they were accompanied, that astonished the Jews as much as their shrewdness. "*igneus est ollis vigor, et celestis origo.*"

When the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Jesus, these very officers, struck with his manner, and with the dignified majesty, which attended whatever fell from his lips, were awed into emotions of reverence. They, therefore, returned to their employers without executing their commission: for "never," said they—"did man speak like this man." John vii. 46.

When a band of soldiers were sent to seize Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, John (xviii.) tells us, that Jesus "went forth and said unto them, whom seek ye?" "They answered him; Jesus of Nazareth." "Jesus saith unto them, *I am he.*" This simple but energetic declaration "*I am he,*" seems to have made, "*as one having authority;*" and it marks the distinction between that authority which is genuine, and that which is assumed. For the Evangelist says,

that "when Jesus had said unto them, *I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground.*"

A stronger or more natural instance of the influence of authority on the mind could not have been given. We see moral suspending the action of physical power.

The unbeliever will tell me, that this incident is a mere fiction of the Evangelist. I will only say, that supposing it a fiction, the historian was more than an ingenious man, so well to adapt the incident to the character, and the character to the incident.

But I can, by no means, think that such an incident would have been related, or even thought of, if it had not taken place. Was an historian so unlettered, and so little acquainted with the agency of metaphysical properties, likely to imagine, that the simple enunciation of Jesus, by the mere impalpable and spiritual force of authority, without a particle of physical power, should make a band of disciplined troops drop their arms and fall prostrate on the earth?

This impression is in perfect consistency with the characteristic energy, which the four Evangelists have with the most perfect harmony, appropriated to the manner of Jesus; but it by no

means leads to the conclusion that their relations are fabulous.

The manner of Jesus, as it is delineated by the Evangelists, is uniformly the same;—impressive and authoritative through the whole recorded period of his ministry. Mean in his circumstances, there are no meannesses, no littlenesses in his manner. His seriousness never dwindles into jocoseness; or contracts into churlishness: his earnestness is never forsaken for levity; and his sincerity is too manifest, too palpable, even for a moment, to excite distrust.

As he draws to the closing scene of his sufferings, his manner so artlessly portrayed, in the simple narrative of the Evangelists, rather increases than decreases in its dignity; his last discourses, are, if any thing, more impressive and authoritative than any, which he had before delivered.\* What he set out with being, he continued to be; and in his character, as it is represented by the Evangelists, there is not a single inconsistent or discordant trait, which can lead us to suspect the truth of the historians, or the accuracy of the likeness.

\* Consult the Gospel of St. John, vii. x. xiii. xiv. xv. xvi.



A PICTURE OF  
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

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*Remarks on the Christian miracles.*

IT is too common for man to make the display of his power the only motive to it's exercise: but the Deity does not affect ostentatious greatness; benevolence directs all his operations. The miracles of our Saviour, resemble the agency of divine wisdom, in the course of nature; they are not a vain and idle display of power; they combine goodness with greatness, vastness of might with copiousness of beneficence\*.

\* There are but two miracles recorded of our Saviour, which do not bear the palpable marks of benevolence;—the destruction of the swine and of the fig-tree. That Jesus should mingle two miracles of destruction, with his numberless miracles of mercy, is not remarkable; if we consider the useful inferences that are to be drawn from them. The miracle of the swine, shews us the importance of the guidance of the Divine

Now, had the miraculous energies, which are ascribed to Jesus, existed only in the imagination of the historians, it is more than probable that the miracles, which they would have imputed to him, would have differed, materially, from those which the Evangelists have recorded. Originating from the invention of man, they would have proved, like the spurious wonders of Pythagoras or of Apollonius Thyaneus, their own refutation. Their inutility, their absurdity or their ostentation would have inevitably convicted them of falsehood.

When men give themselves up to the invention of the marvellous, they soon stumble into extravagancies and inconsistencies. It is hardly possible for falsehood, so closely to counterfeit the language of truth, so ingeniously to assimilate the features of fraud to the countenance of honesty, as not to leave the least semblance of deception.

Supposing the Christian miracles the fabrica-

Providence, in our way through life; without which our own passions, which are the most potent emissaries of Satan, will be our ruin; and will hurry us, as the fiends hurried the swine, into Destruction.

The miracle of the fig-tree teaches us, that God expects us to be prepared to obey the summons to eternity, in season and out of season,—in youth, in manhood, and in age.

tions of imposture, it must be confessed, that the Evangelists have related a series of lies, with all the artless simplicity, all the consistency, all the apparent ingenuousness, which we might expect in a narrative of facts, of which they were the eye-witnesses; and which they could not have a single motive to disguise.

In the relation of the Christian miracles, there is not a single indication of the least wish to guard against any objections that might be made to their authenticity. This shews the undaunted consciousness of truth. An impostor is usually, tremblingly anxious to anticipate objections, of which he betrays the force by his eagerness to repel it. A certain busy jealousy of caution to corroborate truth, always excites suspicion of falsehood.

No suspicion of falsehood, can possibly arise in the mind of any candid inquirer, from the unreserved, unguarded detail of the Christian miracles. They are told as plain matters of fact, of which, not the least doubt was entertained by the writers; and who, consequently, took no pains to provide antidotes against the distrust of their readers. Not haunted by the fears of imposture, they disdained to notice objections which were groundless; or to answer cavils which were vain.

Truth relies on it's native, inherent vigour; while falsehood, which is allied to cowardice, fortifies itself against danger, by superfluous precautions; it lengthens the line of it's defence, and exposes it's impotence, by the busy scrupulosity of it's fears.

The miracles of Jesus bear, on the very face of them, an evidence of their truth; they are associated with no circumstances which can excite the suspicion of their being forgeries; and they are just such miracles as we might suppose, from the most serious exercise of our natural reason, would have been performed, for the purpose of confirming any revelation, which the divine wisdom might vouchsafe to mankind.

The Christian miracles are supported by two kinds of evidence, one internal, the other external. The external evidence has been amply treated of by other writers, and I do not wish to make a book, by retailing arguments that frequent use has worn thread-bare; but I think, that the internal evidence has never yet been considered with that attention which it deserves, or with that nicety of discrimination of which it is susceptible.

The strength of the internal evidence would be more clearly shown, if any, the most ingenious

infidel would attempt to write the fictitious life of a person, said to have been sent from heaven, on purpose to promulgate a new religion, and to reveal the most glorious and useful truths. Let the writer of this history, which I am supposing, for the sake of argument, make the subject of his narrative perform a variety of miracles; and let him try whether, with the utmost labour, he could make them, in all respects, in their characteristic features, in their minute and incidental circumstances, half so natural or so apparently real as those recorded in the gospel. Without any temerity of conjecture we might, I think, beforehand determine, that he, who should make this attempt, would not be able to produce a history, which (without regarding it's proof from testimony, from the circumstances of the times, or the records of contemporary history) would wear those artless and unvarnished features of genuineness, honesty and veracity, which are seen in every page of the memoirs which the Evangelists have left us of Jesus Christ.

There will always be, from the very structure of the human mind, certain nice and peculiar distinctions between forged and real history; which the writer of the former will overlook or will be unable to catch; but which will, at least, prevent his work from imposing on the generality of mankind.



In fabulous memoirs, either some relations will clash with some genuine circumstances of contemporary history, with some manners or usages of the same place, at the same period, or the writer will dwell so much on generalities, as to prove that he could not have been a contemporary of the times or the persons he describes, or an eye-witness of the facts he records; or else he will expatiate so long and largely on particulars—not distinct, appropriate, lively and interesting—but cold, superfluous, inapposite, incoherent—as evidently to betray an attempt to impose.

Nothing of this kind appears in the accounts of the Evangelists.—The historians of truth,—they have surmounted those difficulties, on which the historians of forgery would have stumbled; they have been betrayed into no inconsistencies, either in relation to former parts of their own narrative, or to the manners, customs and laws of the country, where the facts occurred, or to the circumstances of contemporary history; they have related occurrences in that unaffected, undisguised manner, without too many or too few specialities, as eye-witnesses of the facts, and plain and honest historians naturally would do.—They shew no desire to compress and curtail, or to dilate and embellish; every thing they relate is told in a most lively, natural and inarti-

facial manner;—the narrative of the miracles, they attest, if it be generally brief, is always circumstantial; and when copious, it never tires by tediousness of digression or dryness of detail. It's energy is not weakened by it's conciseness; and it's spirit is never evaporated in diffuseness.

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

Remarks on the miracle of the blind man restored to sight by Jesus; according to the account given by St. John ix.

I SHALL now proceed to corroborate and to exemplify several remarks which have been made in the preceding pages, in a critical and circumstantial examination of the miracle of the restoration of a blind man to sight; which is related by St. John ix.

To this miracle, I purposely solicit the attention of those who are disposed to imagine that there is no more credit due to the Christian miracles, than to the wildest fictions, and that the subject of these observations is related more in

( 22 )

A PICTURE OF  
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

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*Remarks on the miracle of the blind man restored to sight by Jesus; according to the account given by St. John ix.*

I SHALL now proceed to corroborate and to exemplify several remarks, which have been made in the preceding pages, in a critical and circumstantial examination of the miracle of the restoration of a blind man to sight; which is related by St. John ix.

To this miracle, I humbly solicit the attention of those, who are disposed to imagine that there is no more credit due to the Christian miracles, than to the wildest fictions.

The miracle, which I have selected for the subject of these observations, is related more in

detail than any of the rest. It bears, at first sight, evident signs of its authenticity; and which will be more apparent, if we contrast it with the most specious wonders of pagan history, or of popish artifice. It glows warm with the colouring of life and nature; and shows none of the awkward or incoherent combinations of a forgery. But let us proceed to the account of the miracle itself.—

“As Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying; Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”

In this introduction, there is no trace of constraint or artifice. The relation opens with the most unaffected ease and air of sincerity. The first incident does not seem to have been feigned, to introduce what follows; and yet it does not inappositely coalesce with it.

To the question of his disciples, the Evangelist relates that Jesus answered, “Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work.* AS LONG AS I AM IN THE WORLD, I AM THE LIGHT OF

THE WORLD." Observe, in this reply, that characteristic confidence and energy, which marks almost all the sayings which the Evangelists have recorded of Jesus. The peculiarity of his manner, the discriminating air of his address is delineated, not with a coarse, but delicate hand, in the words which are printed in Italics and capitals.

It was usual with Jesus, to drop, as it were, incidentally, and to incorporate with apparently extraneous matter, the most weighty sentences;—sentences which were uttered with impressive dignity; and which awaken the mind to the most serious reflections. "*The night cometh when no man can work!*" How much meaning, how much salutary and awful admonition is folded up in this last sentence!—"AS LONG AS I AM IN THE WORLD, I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." These words are another remarkable instance of Christ's manner, sententious and dignified. They bear the character of majesty, and show the unappalled consciousness of more than mortal dignity.

"When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle; and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And he said unto him; go, wash in the pool of



Siloam. He went his way therefore and washed, and came seeing."

This, by no means, looks like the act of an impostor; for such an one usually affects more mystery; and, at least, keeps his nostrums a secret. Jesus, certainly, could by his simple volition have effected the cure; but he seems to have resorted to this secondary means the more eminently to display his power.

The power of God is never more gloriously manifested, than when he produces great ends by feeble instruments. In the miracle which we are considering, common sense must have told the spectators, that the mixture of spittle with dirt, could not have restored sight to one born blind. But so simple and insignificant an application only served to shew, more forcibly, the divine energy that animated the physician.

Had this miracle not been genuine and real, but one which existed only in the imagination of the writer, who was desirous of imposing it on the credulity of the world, it seems probable, that he would have made the hero of his tale adopt a more complicated and mysterious mode of cure; and, at the same time, affect a greater degree of skill. It is likewise probable that the narrator, after having told us that the blind man "went

and washed and came seeing," would have indulged himself in some expressions of panegyric\*, on the wisdom or the benevolence of Jesus; but, instead of this, the Evangelist details a long conversation, which took place on the subject of the cure; and, at which, he seems to have been himself present. His account of it is so vivid, and the transitions in the dialogue so abrupt, and yet natural; as they usually are, on subjects which provoke minuteness of examination, and excite the impatience of contradiction. This will be visible even through the medium of a translation †.

\* One strong proof of the truth of the gospel history is, that there is not a single line in it, which breathes even a whisper of adulation.—All is plain, unadorned narrative; facts occupy the place of eulogies.

† There are very few persons, who, though they may write other languages, can think in any but their own. Much as they may endeavour, they can hardly help tinging a foreign language with the peculiarities of their vernacular tongue.

The Greek of the Evangelists, is tissued with Hebraisms; though they wrote in the first language, they thought in the last.—This, by the by, is an argument against those, who pretend that the gospels were written under the immediate and plenary influence of inspiration;—for, had the thoughts been inspired; the language, in which those thoughts are conveyed, must have been inspired likewise; for very few ideas (those alone excepted which represent sensible objects) can be communicated to the mind of another, but through the medium of words.

"The neighbours, therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said; Is

It may be said that the Almighty could convey to the mind of man even the most abstract notions, without the intermediate use of their ordinary signs.

It is certainly wrong to limit the power of God; but it is equally wrong to multiply miracles without necessity. This is to criminate his wisdom, and, in fact, to question his power, which is always the practical influence of his wisdom.

But it may be said, that the divine communications were imparted to the Evangelists through the medium of language; but that this language was not the Greek but the Hebrew.— To this, we must reply, that Providence always takes the shortest method to accomplish his designs; and that it is therefore more natural to suppose, that had the history of the Evangelists been written under the plenary energy of immediate inspiration, the narrative would have been transmitted to their minds, through the medium of the language *in which it was to be written*; that the historian might not be under the necessity of translating into corrupt Greek, what was inspired in pure Hebrew. If inspiration were necessary to the Evangelists, it was as necessary that the language they wrote in should be inspired, as well as the thoughts; in order to prevent those inaccuracies, which would otherwise necessarily occur, in translating thoughts out of a vernacular into a foreign idiom.

There seems, to me, to be no occasion whatever for supposing, that the historical parts either of the Old or New Testament were indited under a divine and uncontrollable influence.

Had the Evangelists such short memories, that they could not speak truth without the aid of inspiration? Were they not competent to give a faithful narrative of transactions, which had passed either before their own eyes or the eyes of their contemporaries? Like honest historians, could they not con-

not this he that sat and begged? Some said;  
This is him: others said; He is like him: but  
he said; I am he!"

How natural is all this! It has the animation

scientifically relate what they had seen and heard? We pay them a poor compliment by the contrary supposition.—There are, certainly, some few variations in the memoirs of the Evangelists, which, though they *rather confirm than invalidate their authority, considering them as mere human compositions*, are yet totally irreconcilable with the belief of *their full and unconditional inspiration*.

The universal and unconditional inspiration of the Scriptures cannot be maintained; but the inspiration of the prophetic parts, particularly of those which relate to the coming of the Messiah, and the dispersion of the Jews, is capable of demonstrative proof. At this post let us make our stand against all assailants.

Whether the narrative of the Evangelists be inspired or not, it cannot be doubted by any, who are acquainted with both Greek and Hebrew, or who have perused the learned volumes of Michaelis, that the Greek of the Evangelists is cast in the mould of the Hebrew idiom. Hence arises the difficulty of affixing a precise and definite meaning to many passages in the sacred volume; and hence we ought, in many cases, where the native simplicity of the Greek is disguised under the veil of Eastern metaphor, to allow some latitude of interpretation; and, not always, to limit the sense, within the strict and literal acceptance of the words. I am, by no means, for affixing a mythical construction to *any passages* in Scripture; but such an one as should occasionally modify, restrain or amplify the literal sense, so as to suit the Eastern idiom,—in which the writers thought, and in which their meaning, wherever it is dubious, must, of course, be sought.

of life, and the simplicity of truth. The curiosity of the spectators was a good deal excited by the miracle, which had been performed; but yet it was so extraordinary an one, that their minds fluctuated, as might have been expected, between conviction and distrust. "Some said, This is he; others said, This is like him;" but the poor man, as if jealous of the reputation of the miracle, and proud of the privilege of sight, exclaims — "*I am he.*"

"Therefore, said they unto him; how were thine eyes opened?" To this question he answers, "A man that is called Jesus, made clay and anointed mine eyes; and said unto me; Go to the pool of Siloam and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him; Where is he?" (This question shews the emotion of impatient curiosity, turning from the object to the author of the miracle.) "He said, I know not."

The person who had been blind was now brought before the Pharisees. We are first told that it was the Sabbath day, when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. "Then again the Pharisees also asked him, how he had received his sight. He said unto them; He put clay upon mine eyes; and I washed and do see. Then they



called the parents of him that had received his sight."

A modern Skeptic could hardly have questioned the validity of any miracle more acutely than the Pharisees did, on this occasion; and in the true spirit of some modern unbelievers, when they could not invalidate the fact, they sought for a confutation in obloquy and passion.

"Is this your son, whom ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?" The Pharisees, perhaps, expected that the parents of the poor man, intimidated at the sternness of their manner, would either confess their ignorance of the matter, or would give such answers to their questions, as should gratify their wishes, by shaking the credibility of the fact. The answer, however, which the parents returned, though cautious, was by no means evasive.

"We know," said they, "that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now seeth we know not; he is of age; ask him; he shall speak for himself." The Evangelist here speaks with all the particularity of an eye-witness, in the scene which he describes; and how little does what he has here said favour of a forgery!

The Pharisees, baffled in their purpose, and hardly knowing how to get rid of the impression, which the miracle had made, again called for the person who had received his sight; and said unto him; "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." Observe the art of the Pharisees; unable to disprove the fact, they endeavour to set aside the inference, and to silence the voice of truth by dogmatical assertion, *"We know that this man is a sinner."*

How natural is the reply to this speech! such as the event certainly prompted; but such, as if the miracle had been a fiction of fancy, was, by no means, likely to have been invented. "He answered and said; Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." He does not, till he is further provoked, *openly deny* the assertion of the Pharisees, that Jesus was a sinner; but he artfully, though silently, refutes it, by referring them to the miracle.

The Pharisees, who seem to have been incensed by the poor man's answer, proceed to bluster and to brow-beat him, as some counsellors do a witness, whom they want to make to deny or recant the truth. They say unto him, in the short and abrupt interrogatories of passion;

"How did he do to thee? How opened he thine eyes?"

Here the Evangelist, in a measure, makes us spectators in the scene; and delineates, in a very characteristic manner, the impatience and the fury of the Pharisees.

The poor man, stimulated by the vehemence of his adversaries, grows, in his turn, warmer in his manner; and answers their scoffs by a dry but very sarcastic insinuation. "I have told you," said he, "already, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? *Will ye also be his disciples?*"

"Then they reviled him and said; Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses's disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not whence he is."

The poor man, now, instigated by repeated contradiction, and warmed with emotions of gratitude towards his benefactor, proceeds to defend him against the contemptuous language of his accusers. He says; "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but, if any

man be a worshipper of God, him he heareth. Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

The rage of the Pharisees could no longer be restrained; they said unto him; "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out."

Had this miracle been a mere fiction of the historian; we cannot well suppose that he would have inserted the subsequent dialogue, which is a curious and shrewd investigation of the fact, by the spirit of skepticism; and which has not the least appearance of an ideal fabrication; but which, as far as internal evidence can go, proves the reality of the miracle, which it contests. In the course of the dialogue, the gradations of passion are marked with great vivacity, in the quickness of the transitions, and the abruptness of the dispute; and the whole, instead of being the combination of ingenious artifice, seems the easy, natural and unaffected relation of one, who had seen and heard all that he relates.

In the poor sufferer, who had received his sight, we behold reiterated obloquy rousing timidity into boldness; and animating truth from an

indirect and trembling confession, into an open and manly avowal;—in the Pharisees, we see cunning, mortified into rage; and baffled falsehood, ending in angry violence. “They cast him out.”

The narrative of false miracles is commonly its own confutation; and, if this miracle be a fictitious one, we must allow that the unlettered Evangelist excelled in the delicate refinements of fraud; and that he possessed the singular talent of habiting the guilt of fraudulent imposture—not in specious or wanton ornaments—but in the more winning, because genuine, attire of simplicity and truth\*.

Would to God! that any thing which I have said on this miracle, could impress any one with such a conviction of its reality, as that it might remove the film of infidelity from his intellectual sight, and pour into it the light of immortality!

\* The account of the miracle, does not conclude with the altercation between the person who had received his sight and the Pharisees. The Evangelist proceeds to relate its moral influence on him on whom it had been wrought. Jesus having heard of his treatment by the Pharisees, said unto him—“Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”—“And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, for judgment I am come into this world; that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.” Observe the authoritative manner of Jesus.



## A PICTURE OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

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*The character and doctrine of Jesus illustrated.*

THE character of individuals may be usually identified with the influence of early impressions. Those impressions, made at a time when the susceptibility of excitement is the greatest, and when the sensations possess a peculiar vivacity, commonly constitute the basis of character. They communicate to the mind and the affections their discriminating features. In infancy, how frequently do we imbibe the seeds of those sympathies, which, invisibly, influence the happiness or the misery of our future lives !!!\*

\* That peculiar bent of mind, which discriminates individuals through life, and which, when it displays itself, with a predominating vigour, in any branch of art or science, is commonly called Genius, is probably derived from early sympathies; and

From the circumstances, in which Jesus appears to have been placed in early life, we might

which often take place so early that it is impossible to trace them to their original source. Sir Joshua Reynolds, as we are informed by Johnson, in his life of Cowley, imbibed the first fondness for his favourite art, from the perusal of Richardson's treatise on painting.

Chatterton, probably, derived his partiality for antiquities, from having been taught his letters from some illumined leaves of an old missal.

The strange antipathies, hallucinations, or false and preposterous combinations of ideas, which we may frequently observe among our fellow-creatures, seem likewise, for the most part, to be the result of early association. When sensations of a very lively nature have once been felt in the sensorium, their influence is likely to remain; and reason often in vain attempts to abate it. In this case, reason is usually found a feeble adversary to sensation. In childhood, the power of sensation is stronger than that of reason; but as reason gradually unfolds it's energies, the power of sensation becomes less, that of reason greater;—except in those particular instances, in which sensation, aided by the adventitious force of some extraordinary, incidental impressions, gains an ascendant over the reason: from which the latter can never, afterwards, accomplish it's deliverance. Thus, when young people have been frightened, through the folly of their mothers or their nurses, by the terrific tales of apparitions, and have, by this means, had the sensation of fear powerfully excited, they can seldom, as they grow up, entirely break the spell of these terrible illusions.—The sensation of terror, strong and over bearing, palsies the exertions of the reason; and produces, under particular circumstances, a deplorable state of mental imbecility; which precludes the power of counteracting the hallucinations of the fancy, by the energy of intellect. How

suppose, that a very different character would have been formed, from that represented by the

does fancy make fools of us all!! Even the aspiring genius of philosophy has been sometimes crushed into cowardice by it's vain and illusory shadows!

We are liable to be ruled by the influence of incidents or impressions, which we have forgotten; or, in other words, sensations are subject to revival by association, when the causes which first produced them are remembered no longer. Who then can calculate the power of incidental impressions? and how studious ought those, who have the care of children, to be, that no impressions be made on their minds, which, as the very sagacious author of *Zoonomia* has observed, may bias their affections or mislead their judgments to the ends of their lives. See *Zoonom.* ii. 386. Education, as far as it respects the formation of habits, cannot be begun too early.—Habits which beget peevish and unsocial tempers, and which tend to moral depravity, by being associated with malevolence, are probably often formed, by the mismanagement of mothers and nurses, in the first period of childhood. At that period, the faculty of association is most alive and vigorous; and which, according to it's peculiar determination, usually influences the temper and the character of man to the last of his days.

How many useful lessons might the preceptors of youth learn from meditating deeply on the power and influence of early associations!—How subservient might they render them to the cause of science and of benevolence!—The evil effects of early impressions are readily seen; but a wise system of education would counteract the bad and promote the good. We should be particularly solicitous to engraft into the heart, while it is yet incorrupt and innocent, habits of benevolence; and which might readily be effected, by taking advantage of little incidents and casual occurrences, to connect the practice of benevolence with the vivacity of pleasurable sensation;

**Evangelists.** The parents of Jesus were poor, and lived in obscurity; gaining their livelihood

and which would be subject to revival by association, when the incidents, which first excited it, were forgotten. Were pleasurable feelings connected with the idea of benevolence, at a very early period, and before the love of sensual or selfish pleasure had made any very deep impression on the heart, so as to counteract the growth of the amia-sympathies, *the affections would receive a forcible and originally-virtuous bias; which the future intercourse with, or experience of the ordinary selfishness of mankind might modify, but would never destroy.*

The reader will excuse me, if I add another remark to this long note; of which, I hope that the length will be excused, from it's relation to a most important, nay, *the* most important topic of human inquiry;—The formation of the mind to science and to virtue.—I will add, then, careless of the censure, which the observation may bring upon me, from the trifling and the licentious, that if we wish to encourage the free expansion of the benevolent principle in children, we ought never to put a card into their hands.—Young people are brought up, with the notion that card-playing is a pretty, innocent recreation. They, therefore, at a very early period, learn to associate the idea of gaming with many ideas of pleasure; and not, as they ought, with sensations of shame, of pain and disappointment.—I hardly know any admonition which a parent ought more assiduously to instil into his child than this,—that all gaming is a species of robbery by delusion, that it engenders fraud and ends in misery. Even the less species of gaming, which are deemed so perfectly harmless, and so nicely adapted to fill up the yawning vacancies of fatuity,—even these lead directly to a fatal depravation of the moral principle, by extinguishing the benevolent affections.—I never knew a confirmed and habitual card-player, who had not a callous and unfeeling heart. It is indeed impossible for

by their humble industry. They therefore could not afford to give him what among the Jews was called a learned education. He was, probably, brought up to the profession of his father; and, supposing him no more than an ordinary mortal, the only means that he had of acquiring that knowledge, which was requisite to empower him to subvert the religious institutions of his own country, and of the world, and to become the founder of a new and spiritual

any one long to retain the genial glow of one benevolent sympathy, who habitually associates, like the inveterate card-player, sensations of triumph and of pleasure, with the vexation and disappointment of others. Even the least and most innocuous species of gaming have a fatal tendency to imbue, with the taste of pleasure, the emotions of malevolence; and, indeed, we cannot long be partakers in a single amusement, into which one drop of the spirit of gaming has been infused, without it's diminishing the power of that susceptibility of catching the sensations of others, and of springling them with our own; from which sympathy flows, and by which benevolence is excited.—Must not then the higher and more criminal species of gaming tend, with a direct and accelerated influence, to chill the benevolence of the heart, and to sear the sense of integrity of conduct? Does not the spirit of gaming, rankling in the heart, and gradually, but rapidly, undermining all within, infallibly create the cruel and designing villain? Does he not soon learn to plunder the unwary without shame, and even to triumph in proportion to the misery and indigence which he produces? Hear this! ye heroes and heroines of Faro. Would to God, it could raise one blush on your livid cheeks, or one emotion of remorse in your callous hearts!!!



worship, of a house of prayer for all nations, were, by attending the synagogue, and the solemn feasts at Jerusalem.

The whole literature of the Jews consisted of one book—the Law and the Prophets, with the comments and traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees. These were the only sources of wisdom, to which he could have access; but from these, had Jesus not been under a divine influence, imparting wisdom from above, he must have been debarred by ignorance. For we gather from John vii. 15, 16. that he had received no literary instruction whatever. “How (said the Jews) knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” What learning he possessed was not an artificial acquisition. “My doctrine (said Jesus, in reply to the objection of the Jews,) is not mine, but his that sent me.”

A child usually imbibes, at least, some portion of the prejudices of his parents, and of those among whom he is educated. The universal prejudices of the Jews, at the time of the nativity of Jesus, are well known. Among these prejudices, one of the most predominant, was the expectation of a triumphant Messiah, a conceited opinion of their own, and a supercilious disdain of all other nations. These prejudices, instilled by his parents and ac-

quaintance, would have flowed softly and almost insensibly into the bosom of Jesus. And, had he been only an impostor, it is more than probable that he would himself have been the dupe of those early prepossessions\*; and certainly he

\* When men are prejudiced against truth, no proofs, even amounting to demonstration, are sufficient to convince them of it. Blinded by the prepossessions of error, they see every argument that is advanced through a false medium. The Pharisees, though they would gladly have received the Messiah, if he had appeared in the form and manner, in which their prejudices had anticipated his coming; yet, notwithstanding all the miraculous proofs of his divine mission, they turned from him with abhorrence and disgust, when they found that his appearance and his circumstances did not agree with their former darling expectations.

If we enter on the investigation of any two opinions, with the least bias on either side, or with any partial wishes that the one may be false, the other true, we are almost sure, and without knowing it, to be led into error. We give too much weight to the arguments on one side, too little to those on the other. Thus it has often happened, that the supposed truths of philosophers, have been no better than the abortion of infant prejudices. We must continue to be led astray by prepossessions, while, instead of seeking truth, for truth's sake, we set up an idol of our own vanity in its place; and endeavour to adjust the standard of truth to the ever-varying beam of our affections.

All truth is of importance; but religious truth is most important; as the greatest happiness is connected with it.—The first impressions of religious truth are commonly made in childhood. If these impressions happen to be false or pernicious, they can seldom be removed, to make way for more

would not have taken so direct a step to defeat his own views, by opposing the favourite, the long and universally received notions of his countrymen. Had he aspired from ambitious or

salutary notions.—If we sit down at an advanced period of life, to make up our minds on religious matters, and to adopt that mode of faith and worship which shall appear most agreeable to Scripture, scrutinized by candour and interpreted by reason, it is ten to one, but we are misled by the imperceptible and treacherous influence of past associations. Thus, religious opinions, even those which may be said to be formed by mature consideration, are seldom untinctured with the prejudices of infancy.—This ought to teach us to treat the opinions of others without asperity, to advance our own with modesty, and to defend them without bigotry. Of the many modes of faith, which exist among Christians, one only can be right; and it is arrogance and impiety in any man to say that his is *that one*; and that, consequently, all others are erroneous. In matters of religious opinion, no man is rashly to condemn his brother; for no man can advance beyond probability in the proof that his way is the right. But though I would encourage, in individuals, charity, forbearance, and mildness in judging of the religious tenets of others; yet I would, by no means, recommend a cold, languid and lifeless indifference with respect to the complexion of their own. On the contrary, I earnestly exhort every one to embrace with warmth, but without acrimony,—with steadiness, but without perverseness, that mode of faith and worship which, from the best and most unprejudiced inquiry that he can make, he conscientiously believes the right; and then he may securely rely that God will pardon him, if he be in the wrong. A just and merciful judge will, we may be convinced, never punish the adoption of opinions that were false, when it was honestly supposed that they were *true*.

from personal views to counterfeit the Messiah, he would not have attempted to extirpate the prejudices of a whole people, but to turn them to account; he would have taken advantage of every circumstance, to maintain the character he assumed; and to make the popular opinion subservient to his temporal aggrandizement.

But, in the very commencement of his ministry, Jesus directly combated the bigoted attachments, the darling prepossessions of every Jew; and boldly opposed his single and feeble arm, to stem the current of those popular notions, which, at that time, rolled with a fierce impetuosity through the whole extent of Palestine; and of which, he, himself, had he been no more than man, could hardly have sustained the overwhelming force. What individual can resist the powerful influence of general sympathy?

When, therefore, Jesus set up for the propagator of a new religion, he must either have unlearned the prejudices, and totally erased the impressions of his early years; which, on the supposition of his mortality, is highly improbable; or we must allow that he was exempted by the peculiar blessing of the divine influence, from the force of those primary associations, which, according to the usual laws

of action, affect the character and the conduct to the close of life.

Let us now look a little nearer into the character of Jesus, and investigate some of it's peculiar and discriminating excellencies.

In Jesus, we behold none of those showy and noisy virtues, which dazzle vulgar eyes, and attract vulgar praise. In his character, there are none of those ornamental features, which are more subservient to ambition than to utility. There is neither in his actions nor his sentiments the least of parade. There is no fascinating splendour, to cheat the judgment into admiration. There is every thing truly great, without the least show of greatness. It is a character totally distinct from that proud and fiery impetuosity, which often passes for magnanimity; from that fallen apathy, which is sometimes mistaken for grandeur; from that undistinguishing and visionary zeal, which is the mimic of devotion; and from that affectation of purity, which usurps the name of holiness.

It is a character which is inimitable; while it seems rather below than above the level of human imitation. The passive virtues are it's most conspicuous features; and these, however they may be depreciated by common minds, or however easy of attainment they may be accounted, are, in truth,



more difficult to be acquired, and more productive of happiness, than the energies of a busy and a turbulent disposition.

But, if the character of Jesus be discriminated by the loveliest features of gentleness, meekness and forbearance, patience, humility and resignation; still it is marked with more energetic qualities; by a benevolence, which is ever awake to the touch of sympathy, which is ever vigorously employed in dissipating misery. If he be adorned by a mildness that resents no insult and retaliates no injury, he, at the same time, displays a spirit ardent in opposing error and combating wickedness.

Jesus begins his celebrated sermon on the mount, by bestowing the tribute of eternal blessedness on those unostentatious qualities, and retired graces, which least excite the envy or the admiration of the world. It is observable, that he commends those affections and virtues most, by which he was himself most eminently distinguished. He was always the pattern of his own lessons. He taught what he practised; and he practised what he taught. He was poor in spirit; he was meek, merciful and pure in heart.

The more we examine the blamelessness of his

life, and the spirit of his doctrine, the more we shall be convinced that, Jesus was thoroughly acquainted with the mind and affections; and with the efficient causes of human happiness or misery. He knew that the great sum of the afflictions of life was occasioned by turbulence, vindictiveness and malignity of disposition. Hence all public and private strife; the seeds of animosity between individuals and nations. On this account, Jesus laid so much stress upon the passive virtues—on the silent kindness of the heart. Were meekness, gentleness and forbearance universal, the sword might rest in its scabbard—every kingdom and every house would be a temple of peace.

The fiery spirit of revenge is most predominant, in that state of human nature, which is farthest removed from the knowledge of the Deity and from religious purity. The nearer approaches which man makes to the divine perfections, the more will this savage passion be abated. But, though revenge be a passion utterly irreconcilable with the spirit of pure religion, still the complete suppression of it, is utterly impossible to man without the divine assistance. For man, being made, exquisitely sensible to pleasure and to pain, has naturally a desire for the first, and an aversion for the last. Hence, he cannot help associating some idea of

malevolence with the image of those, who wilfully inflict painful sensations. The passion of hate begins, however faintly, to ferment the moment an injury is felt; and, even in the gentlest of human bosoms, there is some transient interval of passion, before the religious sentiments or benevolent sympathies can check the angry effervescence.

Every physical sensation of pain, is accompanied with a wish to remove it; and where is it so natural to wish to remove it, as to the cause which occasioned it?—Hence the desire of reverberating pain and retaliating injuries. A revenge of this kind, which is rather of a physical than of a moral nature, would cease with the sensations that produced it. But revenge, we know, often rankles in the heart, long after the cause which first excited it has ceased to exert any painful influence. The sentiment of resentment is cherished by malignant reflections, when it's first effervescence has subsided; and is combined with many associated ideas of honour or of pleasure, till cruelty almost becomes a pastime.

How much might we diminish the sum of human misery, if we could, in some measure, reverse the common order of human sympathies, and teach children universally to associate the

idea of honour with forbearance, and of pleasure with forgiveness !!! How much rancour and bloodshed might, by this means, be prevented !!! The happiness of individuals, is, I am inclined to believe, always in a direct ratio with their benevolent sympathies ;—the happiness of mankind, considered in the aggregate, evidently is.

Of all the persons recorded in history, Jesus seems the only one who ever obtained a complete triumph over the passion of resentment ; and, in whose bosom, it was totally absorbed in the opposite passion of love. This love, he demonstrated by an uniform meekness and forbearance ; by the happiness which he diffused while he lived and when he died. He endured with patience, and without the least acrimony, persecution, scorn and insult ; he never returned railing for railing ; but, contrarywise, blessing. He exhibited that poorness of spirit, which is the highest degree of magnanimity ; in as much as a victory over the angry passions, and the indignant feelings that rage for vent in the bosom, is the most difficult and most glorious of achievements. The conqueror of Darius and of Persia was ruled, like a weak woman, by the gust of his resentments. But he, who triumphed over the cross, was signalized by a greater achievement than the subjugation of kings, or the subversion of empires ;—by the mastery of himself ! He

never performed any action, that, in the least, indicated resentment; he never uttered a word of anger or a taunt of bitterness.

Such was the meekness and forbearance of him, who is, by a beautiful emblem of innocence, called—the Lamb of God. Of this temper and carriage he set us the example; because he knew that it would most effectually promote our happiness here; and fit us for an intercourse with the blessed spirits hereafter; who dwell in the mansions of peace, where turbulence and malignity can never enter.

Jesus laid the utmost stress, in most of his discourses, on the importance of the placid and the benevolent affections; and, probably, from their being the essential characteristics of that state of future happiness, to which the good Christian hopes for a passage through the grave. It is the opinion of the immortal Hartley, that the associations or sympathies, we contract on earth, will accompany us into a future state. If this be true, and it is certainly no unscriptural doctrine, but apparently confirmed by the general *tendency* of the discourses of Jesus, of what vast consequence is it to us, to cherish the benevolent sympathies, and to indulge all the kind affections!!! How studiously ought parents to labour, to instil them into their children, that they may



grow up with them, and, after this life, expand into immortal happiness! How earnestly ought we to check the progress of all malevolent sensations! How anxious should we be to avoid associating any ideas of pleasure with the sight of misery, with the infliction of pain, or with any act of inhumanity! The malignant passions are, even here, the source of the acutest misery, to those who unfortunately indulge them; and on the supposition \*, I have stated, they will prove

\* The Scriptures give us reason to expect a resurrection of the individual. What constitutes individuality is the consciousness of identity. Our resurrection, or return to life, will not be complete, unless the consciousness, which constitutes the individuality of our present being, be annexed to our future. That this consciousness be complete, it is necessary that those associated sensorial motions and sympathies, which constitute what may be called our moral nature, here, should pass with us into another world. In this life, improveable faculties, particularly of affection and sympathy, are committed to us; and I think it probable, that our next stage of existence will be a state of improvement.—Our Saviour has intimated to us, that, in heaven, there are many mansions. It is, therefore, highly probable, that, in these mansions, the condition and circumstances of existence will be purposely adapted to the former associated moral habits of the individual; and best suited to their farther expansion and improvement. Supposing man destined to an eternal existence, we cannot imagine, that the first moment he is made the citizen of another kingdom, he will become as wise or as virtuous as he is capable of being; or as he will ever be; and that he will thus continue stationary, at one point, through all the revolutions of infinite time. It is a far more reasonable and probable conjecture, that, in a

a source of the most exquisite torment in another life. Thus, the associations, of this state not be-

future life, individuals will begin where they left off in this;—that they will still possess improveable faculties, but to which, a greater vigour will be communicated, in proportion to the greater objects, about which they will be occupied; and the wider sphere of existence, which they will embrace.

As individuals are to carry with them into other mansions their former associations and sympathies, the benevolent and the malevolent, or the good and the wicked, must, after death, occupy very different states of being; the former will migrate to a state of comfort and happiness—the latter of torment and misery.

The benevolent, who have cherished and have exercised all the kind and tender affections, will hereafter find them a source of the most exquisite joy;—of a joy not mingled, as in this world, with bitterness, or soured by distrust. They will find objects suited to the expansion of every amiable sympathy, with which their hearts were ever warmed; and in proportion as the benevolent affections of the soul expand and multiply, by being placed in a scene more congenial to their nature,—in a scene where kindness, instead of being blasted by ingratitude, will meet with kindness, and love with love;—in the same proportion, must the stock of their individual happiness be augmented.

Far different will be the lot of the malevolent; who have associated ideas of pleasure with any acts of inhumanity; who have wilfully marred the fair prospects of others happiness, or contracted an insensibility to others misery! We may imagine that such persons will, in a future scene of being, be placed under such circumstances, and amid such relations, as that the want of benevolence shall be to them a source of exquisite torture and unutterable woe.

The eternity of punishments for temporary offences, and

ing dissolved in the next, the malignant will be punished by habitual and inalienable sensations

committed by beings who are covered with frailties, seems difficult to be reconciled to that attribute of INFINITE MERCY, or, *what with respect to an All-perfect Being, is the same thing*, that attribute of INFINITE JUSTICE, which belongs to the Maker of the universe, and the Father of mankind. May we not therefore infer (I speak with deference to older and wiser theologicians), without derogating, IN THE LEAST, *from the truth of Scripture*, that those passages which describe future punishments as eternal, are to be figuratively construed; that they intend pains of long—not of infinite duration;—*vast—not irremediable or never ceasing affliction!* The wisest and best legislators among men, have never considered punishment in any other light, than as conducive to moral amendment;—and is it not blasphemy against the divine attributes, to suppose that the All-wise, All-just, and All-merciful *will ever inflict punishment for it's own sake, and without any view to the good or the reformation of him on whom it is inflicted?* Let not our ignorance of the true Scripture idiom, and of Eastern phraseology, lead us to this climax of folly and presumption!!!

From a serious investigation of the Divine attributes, and a candid and rational interpretation of Scripture, we may infer that the punishment of the wicked, in another world, *is designed for, and will tend to, their amendment*;—and, consequently, that the malevolent will be gradually, though slowly, and by the experience of severe and excruciating misery, cured of their habits of malignity. The difficulty of eradicating habits, which have been long indulged, is universally acknowledged; and, in a future world, it is not improbable that this difficulty may be still more difficult. Thus, the punishment of the malignant, in another state of existence, though not eternal, *must necessarily be of long continuance*;—of a continuance so long as in the bold, unconditional and hyperbolic sentence

of their own malignity. They will, in some measure, resemble the Devil, the real or allegorical element of evil; who is painted, in scripture, as continually going about, seeking whom he may devour; destitute of a single spark of one benevolent sympathy;—the image of pure, unmixed malignity!!! Could he have been more forcibly delineated, either to excite terror or abhorrence? But let us return to the contemplation of a more pleasing form.

Of genuine humility, Jesus was a striking example, in his whole deportment; in every gesture, every word, every action. His humility was not the affectation of that virtue, which is so often assumed in the world, to cover an intolerable pride. It was pure and unadulterated; not the show, but the substance of a lowly heart.

That the humility of Jesus was not a veil for arrogance, or for vanity, he gave the most lively instance, on the night before his crucifixion, in washing the feet of his disciples. This act of humiliation he performed, as a lasting admonition against that pride of heart, which often

of Eastern language, to merit *the name of the everlasting fire*. Their agonies will, probably, have a duration beyond the reach of our narrow notions of time; and will last till the consciousness of guilt has entirely vanished; and the soul, *no longer its own tormentor*, expands to the pleasures of benevolence.

makes man look with disdain on his brother-man.

There is nothing more ludicrous, in the eye of a contemplative philosopher, and there can be nothing more impious, in the sight of heaven, than that supercilious insolence, with which, ambitious vanity, raised by accidental distinctions, regards those beneath it. Such a temper Jesus has forcibly reprimanded in the instance, which I have mentioned. "Ye call me," said Jesus, "master and lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I, then, your lord and master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John xiii. 13, 14, 15. As if he had said, "If I, who was glorified with the father before the world was," John xvii. 5. can bend to the lowest offices; and without sully my majesty, can perform those acts which are esteemed the most servile degradations; shall thy vanity, O man, render thee arrogant and overbearing! Shalt thou deem thyself contaminated, by any act of condescension, because thou happenest to be raised a step higher in the scale of wealth or honour, than thy brother! If I did not refuse the garb of mortality, and among mortals, the form of a servant, shalt thou, who, in the sight of heaven, art but a worm of the



earth, vainly fancy thyself made of better stuff than thy fellow-worm!

That meekness of temper and gentleness of manners, which is the genuine ornament of the Christian, Jesus recommended to his disciples, in a way more persuasive and interesting, than could have been done by all the studied graces of polished eloquence. Being asked by his disciples, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" "he called a little child, and set him in the midst of them;"—one, who was an image of benignity and suavity of disposition; one, whose heart was not yet debased by a commerce with the world, or corroded by the passions of envy or ambition\*. "Whoever," said Jesus, "shall humble himself, as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

There is not, perhaps, a stronger indication of either meekness of spirit or benevolence of heart, than a kind attention to little children;—the rose-tinged symbols of unsuspicious innocence, in whose smile there is a captivation, that touches every chord of tenderness, and whose eyes, *beaming no guile*, ought to interest every beholder in their happiness. He, who can behold the smooth and benign features of infancy without emotions

\* See Matt. xviii.

of complacency and fondness, hath a heart indisp-  
posed to the soft instillations of genuine benevo-  
lence. At the sight of playful childhood, our  
sympathy is awakened by the double attraction  
of it's helplessness and it's innocence; which will  
never fail, in the breast of the true follower of  
Jesus, to excite strong sensations of tenderness;  
which he, who does not or cannot feel, must,  
at least, be imbued with the venom of malignity.

Jesus seems to have considered a want of bene-  
volence towards little children a proof of incur-  
able depravity of heart: "Who so," said he, "shall  
offend one of these little ones, it were better for  
him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck,  
and that he were drowned in the depth of the  
sea." Again he says, "Take heed that ye de-  
spise not one of these little ones; for I say unto  
you, that, in heaven, their angels do always be-  
hold the face of my father which is in heaven\*."

*"Their angels do always behold the face of my  
father, which is in heaven."* Who can think of  
this expression, and dare to make the little desti-  
tute and orphaned innocent a victim of rapine, or  
a prey to sorrow? Who can think of this ex-  
pression, when he contemplates the unwrinkled

\* These expressions seem to intimate, that little children  
are, in a more especial manner, dear to God, and the objects of  
his guardian providence.

forehead of smiling infancy, without it's inspiring in his breast the soft flow of those benevolent sensations, of which language cannot convey the charm; and which, it is probable, resemble, though in a faint degree, those pleasures which will be tasted in heaven, by "the spirits of good men made perfect?"

The attentive kindness of Jesus, to little children, and his solicitude for their welfare, is no counterfeit or deceitful indication of the benevolence of his heart; of which we may gather a number of other delicate and interesting traits, from the accounts, which the Evangelists have left of his amiable character.

It must be remembered, that the Evangelists are no panegyrists. They are plain and artless relators of matters of fact. They make no efforts to interest the passions; they do not labour to lead men captive down the stream of their sensations. Brevity and simplicity are the characteristics of their relations; but their brevity is often more eloquent than the diffuseness of eloquence; and their simplicity, which is the earnest of their sincerity, is more interesting than the most splendid diction, elaborated into pathos, or refined into elegance.

In painting the likeness of Jesus, such as he

was, and such as they knew him to be, the Evangelists do not endeavour to set off the tenderness of his nature, in the gaudy array of modern rhetoric. They delineate his feelings, by describing his acts; and they shew the kindness of his heart, by simply informing us of the extent of his beneficence.

When Simon Peter's wife's mother was dangerously ill with a fever; the Evangelist briefly tells us; "He came and *took her by the hand*; and *lifted her up*, and the fever left her." Mark i. 31.

When the centurion besought Jesus, for his servant who was sick of the palsy, his commiseration is not mentioned; but who does not read it in his answer? "*I will come and heal him.*"—Here, I cannot help observing, that we never hear Jesus pleading business, or the occupation of personal or temporal concerns, as an excuse for not doing good. The beneficence which he exerts, he does not endeavour to magnify, as we are too apt to do, as a sacrifice of time or a neglect of other interests.

He does not vex the wretched by suspense, or by holding out hopes which were never meant to be realised. How many, among the sons of men, are solicitous to obtain, without cost, the praise of beneficence? when, perhaps, they deserve

nothing but execrations, for prolonging the weariness of misery, and abusing confidence by fallacious promises, till all the energies of hope wither and perish under the anguish of disappointment. It was not so with Jesus;—he did not aggravate the sufferings of the unhappy by the bitterness of “hope deferred.”

In St. Luke viii. we are told, that “a ruler of the synagogue fell down at Jesus’ feet; and besought him, that he would come into his house; *for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying.*” It may not be amiss to remark, what simplicity and yet what genuine pathos there is in this concise narrative.

We behold the father rent with distraction, at the last sickness of an only child, throwing himself at the feet of Jesus; and imploring mercy. At this affecting spectacle, did no tear of sympathy start into the eye of Jesus? The Evangelist is silent;—but we learn from what follows, that Jesus was not an unconcerned spectator of a father’s anguish.

Before Jesus could arrive at the house, the ruler of the synagogue receives a message;—“Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the master.” The sympathising tenderness of Jesus now shews itself; but yet it is not made, as it were, to pro-



ject from the page of the historian, or to catch attention by any pomp of language or parade of sorrow.

At the news of his daughter's death, it is probable, that the fond parent could no longer restrain the violence of his grief; but the divine comforter was at hand to assuage it. "Fear not," said he, "believe only and she shall be saved." This is an expression of condolence, not feigned and artificial, as the sum of human condolence usually is, but simple and sincere; kindly chafing away sorrow, and recalling the drooping eye to happiness.

When Jesus arrived at the ruler's house, he suffered none to enter, but his favourite disciples, Peter, James and John, and the father and mother of the deceased. That delicacy which characterised the benevolence of Jesus, is seen even in this little circumstance. He would not add to the affliction of the parents, by the idle gaze of thronging curiosity.

The sight of a dead corpse is, at all times, a melancholy spectacle; and more particularly so, when that corpse is *youth cut off in it's prime*. To the parents, bereft of the only pledge of their union, and hope of their age, it must have been a most excruciating and heart-rending sight. Not

one, indeed, of those who were present could look on with dry eyes; "*they all wept and bewailed her.*"

Jesus, in whose breast, commiseration was never chilled by apathy, endeavours to cheer them with his accustomed simplicity of manner. "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth." But "they laughed him to scorn." How natural is this part of the narrative!

In great depression of mind, when the spirits can no longer bear up against the weight that oppresses them, it is revolting to be told that our pains are imaginary, and our sorrows an illusion. "They laughed him to scorn;"—not that they would not willingly have believed his words, "she is not dead but sleepeth," true; but because they were convinced of the reality of her decease; and, perhaps, thought it a reproach on their understanding (man, even in the midst of agony, is not impervious to the touch of pride), to have an affliction imputed to fancy, which they too truly felt to be a sad reality. They, therefore, treated his suggestion with derision.

But the dead soon recovered, as if from sleep, at the energetic call of Jesus: "Maid, arise!" And he commanded to give her meat. Having

restored life, his benevolence was not satisfied without annexing the means of supporting it.

Of the sympathizing tenderness of Jesus, we have another very characteristic but artless relation, in Luke vii. As Jesus was approaching the city of Nain, "behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." What simplicity and pathos is there in this narration! The subject is made to furnish it's own ornaments; it is cumbered with no embellishments.

The dead man, with whom the mourners were proceeding to the place of interment, "*was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.*" After having mourned over the corpse of her husband, she was now going to behold, interred in the silent grave, the only remains of their mutual affection. The son, who, perhaps, she fondly hoped would be the stay of her infirmities, and the solace of her age; and who, in the ordinary course of nature, ought to have survived her, had gone before her.

The heart of Jesus was too prone to sympathy to let him sullenly pass by the poor destitute. "When the Lord saw her he had compassion on her;" and said unto her, with his wonted brevity, "Weep not." *He* had not learned that verbose

style of condolence, which says much and means nothing. His concise "weep not," was more impressive than all the flowery tautology of modern commiseration.

"And he came and touched the bier; and they that bore him stood still;" and he exclaimed with an authority, which can either destroy the living, or animate the dead; "Young man, I say unto thee, arise! and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak." This moment stiff and motionless as a clod,—in the next, the current of life, fresh and warm, rushed into the heart; and the tongue, that was thought silent for ever, spoke again."

But the sympathising tenderness of Jesus did not cease, while any, the least opportunity remained for it's exercise. He had raised the young man to life; but this was not enough, till he had restored him to the embraces of his mother\*; and witnessed the tears of affliction giving way to the warm and refreshing drops that would flow from the renewal of their mutual affection. How affecting, and yet how delicious, must this interview have been! How similar to that which departed friends will ex-

\* The Evangelist briefly tells us, "and he delivered him to his mother;" he does not detail the manner of doing it.

perience, when they meet again in a happier world!

We may learn, from these instances which I have adduced, and to which many others might be added, that the heart of Jesus was susceptible of the most delicate sensations of compassion;—that his benevolence was not a vivid effervescence, but fresh with life, vigorous in pursuit, unwearied in exertion, choice, not discriminate, in it's objects;—and that he knew how to give a softening charm to the most signal acts of beneficence, by the kindness of manner with which he performed them.

The benevolence of Jesus, though unbounded, was yet not that pretended and much-boasted sentiment of universal love, which loses sight of individual misery; and scorns the endearing ties which bind families and nations. He went about doing good; binding up the broken-hearted; pouring comfort into the bosom of the wretched. As he came to exhibit a character, proper for the imitation of man, he came adorned with all those affections, which are the brightest ornaments of our nature.

Men can never be brought to square their actions by a rule which they do not understand.—Such a rule is that of the *general good*, which



Mr. Godwin recommends to his disciples, as a safe and unerring guide through the intricate maze of human intercourse ; and as the best and only infallible test of justice and benevolence. By this he would appreciate the worth of the human character.

But *the general good*, is a rule of conduct which no individual can comprehend ; because he can never so nicely balance the average of all the particular interests of the different parts of the community, as to know wherein the general interest resides. But though we cannot ascertain how, most effectually, to promote the general good, yet we can readily discern by what mode of conduct we can best promote the good of individuals,

Benevolence, therefore, consists in doing good to individuals, without staying nicely to examine how the good done may affect the public interest. We are not to suffer the heat of benevolence to expire, while we are making such cold-blooded calculations.

Man is the creature of sympathy ; and, therefore, in his conduct to his fellow-creatures, he will be ruled by it's impulse. But no individual can sympathise with the general good, or with an impalpable abstraction ; for sympathy implies

distinct sensations of tenderness towards some particular object ; and which, at least, in some degree, correspond with the sensations in the object by which our sympathy is excited. We can, therefore, only sympathise with the interests of individuals.

If I were to behold a person weltering in his blood or writhing in agony, from a broken limb, on the highway, he would instantly excite my sympathy ; and I should endeavour to procure him relief and consolation, without once considering whether the community would be more benefited by his death than his recovery. But, according to the benevolent system of Mr. Godwin, this calculation ought to be the preliminary to any exertions of kindness ; and, according to his notions, if the interests of the community could have been promoted by the death of this poor wretch, or if the relief administered could have been applied in some other way, more productive of general good, then this act of humanity would become an act of injustice.

Mr. Godwin, in his *Pol. Just.* b. 2. c. 2. on *justice*, intimates, that the relations of blood, of friendship and of gratitude are considerations beneath the regard of a rational being ; who, in his whole conduct, ought to study the interest of

the community, though at the expense of any individual, even one as dear to him as a brother, a father or a benefactor.

Mr. G. puts a case, to shew how a man ought to act, when what he calls justice clothes with sympathy.

If the palace of Fenelon, the author of *Telemachus*, had been on fire, and the alternative had been, that either the archbishop or his valet must perish in the flames, Mr. Godwin would have preferred preserving the life of the former, as more conducive to the general weal; even though the valet had been his brother, his father or his benefactor.

Mr. G. thinks that an individual ought to sacrifice all personal affections and duties, to that one great duty, which he owes to the community. Did man approach nearer to a state of pure intelligence, did he excel in that largeness of mind and comprehension of view, which, at one glance, could discern the aggregate interest of the body politic, his reasoning would be just; but, at present, the rule by which he proposes to regulate human conduct is much more fallible than that of sympathy, or the preference of individual good to the good of the community.

While we remain so ignorant of that in which the general weal consists, there seems no reason, why, in the vain search of an ideal good, we should exhale into airy nothingness, all the sweet though partial affections of family and of friendship. In the case which Mr. G. proposes, who would not prefer saving the life of his brother, his father or his benefactor, to that of the archbishop?

Mr. G. says, that the maxim of our Saviour, which directs us "to love our neighbour as ourselves," is not modelled with the strictness of philosophical accuracy. It certainly does not propose, as a rule of life, a cold abstraction, intricate and embarrassing, which it must be always difficult to understand, and on which it can be seldom safe to act;—but it proposes a rule of life which comes home to every man's bosom; and of which neither the learned nor unlearned can mistake the application. It is a maxim, which he, who invariably pursues, will never act wrong. It will preserve him from every act of injustice and of inhumanity. It is a maxim, which gives life and energy to all the sweet domestic affections, which strengthens the sentiment of love, of friendship and of gratitude, and which teaches us to identify our feelings with those of wretchedness, in all its forms.

The virtue of individuals, seems to consist not so much in serving the aggregate, as the detail of society ; not so much in general as partial good ; for the influence of any single act on the whole mass of society, is beyond the utmost stretch of calculation.—When we behold misery in it's minute detail, we can adjust the means to the end, the relief to the necessity. It is impossible to do so, if we strive to embrace a wider sphere of action, too vast for our grasp, too immense for our discernment.

Would but individuals, with a tender and mutual benevolence, strive to promote the welfare of other individuals, dear or endeared to them, by blood, by friendship or by gratitude, or by some of the many tender incitements of sympathy, the general happiness would, ultimately, be much more effectually promoted by the beneficence of every man, directed towards particular and specific objects, than by the solitary and more ambitious exertions of each individual, to produce not partial but universal good.

I think I may safely say, that no man was ever warmed with the genuine fire of universal benevolence, while he was entirely exempt from all local and personal attachments. No good man can be insensible to the delicate and in-



sinuating partialities of friendship, of kindred and of country. These affections are almost inseparable from our frame; and are produced by those numberless associations of ideas, and sensations of past and present time, of which we can neither calculate the power, nor controul the influence. The principle of association seems, indeed, by the wise author of all things, to have been made a part of our nature; for the purpose of connecting us by the strongest and dearest ties with our families and our homes; and of making us feel, more vigorously, the inspiring glow of friendship and of patriotism.

The breast of an individual is too narrow to feel, with any distinctness, the sentiment of universal philanthropy. Our affections must, at least at first, have some distinct object on which to fix;—an object, whose magnitude is not too great for the excitement of lively and particular sensations. What is termed universal philanthropy, is merely a general and confused feeling, seldom animating to energetic action. As we must proceed from particular to general truths, so it is from individual affections alone, that the soul expands to the genuine, ardent and diffusive love of the human race. From the affections of family, of friendship, and of the spot which was endeared to us by early intercourse, by tender recollection, and by numberless associations,

springs the love of our country; and thence the heart kindling with increased benevolence, and catching the flame of divine love, enlarges into a wider and wider sphere, till it opens to embrace the world.

I am not, indeed, ignorant that many persons have felt the heat of the partial and local affections; have loved their kindred, their friends and their country; whose bosoms never glowed with the sentiment of universal benevolence\*; and that many who have disclaimed the

\* One of the persons here alluded to, is Mr. Burke. Of the character of this extraordinary personage, I shall present the reader with a slight sketch, not drawn from personal acquaintance, but from calm reflection on his conduct and his writings.

The affections of Mr. Burke all gravitated towards his kindred, incapable of a wider expansion. His morality was neither enlarged by a diffusive benevolence, nor animated by an enlightened piety. His friendship was warm while it lasted; but it was liable to be interrupted by the irritable petulance of his temper. Inflated with the pride of genius, he was impatient of contradiction; and his resentments were, in more than one instance, indulged even to bitterness.

His fame, with posterity, will rest chiefly on the splendour of his eloquence; but this being employed rather in the embellishment of prejudices that are evanescent, than in support of principles that are immortal; I doubt whether it have earned him a wreath of glory, that may wave defiance to the rage of time. His style, as an orator, is vehement, impetuous, and often highly impassioned; fraught with the

tender charities of family, friends and kindred, have loudly boasted of being fired with the spirit

beautiful combinations of genius, and displaying the magnificent decorations of an exuberant fancy; but he is rarely discriminated by those sublime conceptions, which arise from comprehensive views, and which mark an intellect of the highest order. His wit sparkles with brilliancy; its flashes often captivate as much by their justness as their splendour; but he sometimes pursues them till they lose their lustre, and languor takes place of astonishment.

When he attempts to reason in a logical order, his arguments, too often, resemble the Sibyl's leaves; they are dispersed in a moment, by the breath of his imagination. His judgment may, for a while, rule his fancy; but his fancy always, at last, succeeds in ruling his judgment.

He was well acquainted with men, and with human affairs in their little detail; but he does not seem to have considered, like a philosopher, the general principles, or like a benevolent Christian, the general interests of human nature. His political reasonings are often weak, because they are taken entirely from partial views, and from fleeting interests; and do not rest on the basis of eternal and unchangeable truth. Could he have effected his wishes, he would have established an oligarchy of wealth and rank, on the ruins of the rights of mankind. He would have placed the liberties of the people on no firmer basis than that of the concessions of the crown; and he would have despoiled the monarchy of those wholesome limitations, which are a source of happiness both to the prince and to the people.

The principles of Mr. Burke, seem to have been rather modified by his interest, than his interest by his principles. His principal pursuit was private emolument; but he endeavoured to impress on others, till perhaps he had impressed on himself, the conviction that it was the public good.

of universal Philanthropy \*. With respect to those of the first class, I strongly suspect that it

His private embarrassments, increased by inattention and profuseness, unfortunately for his country and for the world, rendered him venal; and, if we may judge from his sentiments on the resistance of America, his opinions on the French revolution, were less swayed by his conscience than his pension.—Possessing those energies of genius, which, taking an independent direction, might have rendered him as much the benefactor as he was the ornament of his species; his talents contributed but little to enlarge the stock of wisdom; and though they have rendered some service to taste, and have diversified the elegant combinations of language; yet these are but paltry benefits, compared with the miseries of that desolating contest, in which, they contributed to involve his country.

\* Rousseau has been too often extolled as a philanthropist. Mr. Burke said of him, that he loved his kind and hated his kindred.—The exposure of his children, by whatever sophistry it may be excused, is an indelible blot on his humanity; and invalidates all his pretensions to philanthropy. For, can that philanthropy be genuine, which is founded on the extinction of the parental affections; and which, with more than savage brutality, forsakes the poor innocents, it brings into the world?

Every page of Rousseau glows with the captivations of that sentimental luxury, of which he is so great a master; and which he arrays in all the blandishments of eloquence. Hence the source of that admiration, which his writings have so universally excited. Though his judgment, as a philosopher, was not profound; yet his taste was so exquisite, that he strews flowers in the most rugged way, and interests the passions and the fancy, in the investigation of the most abstract propositions. This is his great excellence.

will be found, that their affections were prevented, by narrow prejudices, from a wider

In his new *Eloise*, the interest consists, not so much in the diversity or the combination of the incidents, as in the beauty of the sentiment and the magic of the diction. The picture of *Julia*, is highly finished; but it leaves on the mind more impressions of respect, than of tenderness, of admiration than of love—At times, she appears an heterogeneous mixture of apathy and passion, of prudence and of coquetry. In some situations she wants tenderness; in others firmness; and she is often less governed by the warm impulses of affection, than by the abstractions of philosophy.

His *Emilius*, though marked by the illuminating touches and the original conceptions of genius, yet, considered as a system, is more conspicuous for its singularity than its truth. It portrays a system of education, which, if it were universally adopted, would keep the human species in a state of permanency between light and darkness, between savage barbarity and civilized refinement. It would counteract the moral and physical improvement of man; the progress of knowledge and the productiveness of industry.

Though *Rousseau* had little beneficence, yet his writings, breathing nothing but the reciprocal love and kindness and confidence of the Golden Age, contributed, by their wide diffusion and their enchanting eloquence, to render humanity fashionable; and they have, at least, this merit,—that no man can well rise from reading them, without feeling a higher respect for his species.

That extreme and febrile sensibility, which was the characteristic peculiarity of *Rousseau*, while it proved the origin of many of his miseries, was, perhaps, a principal source of his greatness. It imparted a singular delicacy, freshness and animation to every page of his writings.—His feelings, in whatever channel they flowed, rushed on with a



expansion. Of the last class, I fear that the majority are usually men of little virtue and less sensibility; too cold for friendship; too inert

resistless impetuosity; but, in the end, they made a wreck of his understanding. His judgment was lost in the unremitting turbulence of his sensations; and in some intervals of insanity, he exhibited the melancholy prospect of genius crumbling into ruins.

The language of Rousseau, was always a faithful mirror of what was passing in the heart; which now thrilled with rapture, and now raged with passion. Of his style, the peculiar characteristic, is exuberance of imagery; profusion, without distinction of lustre. It often resembles a landscape, in which there is a great assemblage of beautiful forms, without any intermediate spots of barrenness; but without any objects of a striking and prominent grandeur; and, in the contemplation of which, the eye is, at last, satiated by the uniformity.—Yet, highly coloured as is the eloquence of Rousseau, I believe that the generality of readers would peruse his works with less relish, if they were less adorned. And, it must be confessed, that the ornaments with which they are embellished, are not the frippery and patchwork of a paltry artist, but the rich copiousness of an highly saturated imagination; and they often possess a charm, of which, even the apathy of the coldest critic can hardly be insensible to the fascination.—He who wishes to perfect himself in those delicacies of language or curious felicities of phraseology, which impress a palpable form, a living entity on the fleeting tints and sensations of the heart, should carefully analyse the genius of the style of Rousseau; should search into the causes, from which result the beauty and splendour of his combinations; and endeavour to extract, from an attentive perusal of the *Eloise* and the *Emilius*, a portion of that taste by which they were inspired.

for beneficence; and claiming the wreath of philanthropy, without deserving it by any acts of humanity.

Individuals ourselves, our affections (if I may use a quaint expression) have a natural tendency towards individuality. He who pretends to love all persons alike, really loves none. There can, in the human breast, be no general and universal, without some partial affections. It is from the combination of particular sympathies, of personal and local attachments, that we at last imbibe the flame of a comprehensive and boundless benevolence.

The breast of Jesus was certainly warmed with the brightest fires of universal love; but that love did not extinguish the lesser charities. The spirit of philanthropy did not liberate him from the tender bondage of local and personal attachments. His heart was not insensible to the sympathies of private friendship\*. Though he selected twelve persons to be his disciples and constant companions; yet of these twelve he seems to have regarded three, Peter, James and John†,

\* See John xi. 5.

† They alone of his disciples were permitted to be present at his transfiguration, and during his agony in the garden. See Matt. xxvi. 37. The Evangelists have exhibited the

with a more peculiar and affectionate confidence; and of these three, one is emphatically

character of Peter, more distinctly than that of the other apostles.—The passions of Peter were strong, but they were not under the controul of his discretion. His attachment to his master, partaking of his constitutional vivacity, was fervent and sincere; but, like most men of a sanguine temperament, he seems to have been governed rather by impulse than reflection. The impetuosity of his temper often embarrassed him in errors; and his first emotions were too vehement to be lasting.—What he felt, he felt strongly; but the violence of his sensations occasioned him to overlook the disproportion between his strength and his resolutions. From the effervescence of heroism, he sunk into the languor of cowardice.—He had zeal—but it was not moderated by prudence, nor confirmed by perseverance. He was ready to encounter danger, without measuring it's magnitude; eager in pursuit, he looked only at the end, without regarding it's intermediate obstacles. One instant we behold him plunging into the sea, impatient to meet Jesus, and made buoyant by faith, walking steadily on the waters—the next, he falters on the billows, and exclaims, in despondency, “ Lord, help me, I perish!”—When his master was apprehended, he instantly drew his sword; and, in a moment of passion, prepared, like a brave man, for resistance; but when he saw the soldiers leading Jesus away to judgment, he followed the pusillanimous example of the other apostles, who “ forsook him and fled.”—Still the emotion of fear seems to have been soon replaced by that of affection; and Peter was never backward in obeying the impulse of his sensations. He got admission into the hall of judgment; and, here, we might suppose that he would not have appeared, unless he had summoned courage to avow himself, and to live or to perish with his master.—But far otherwise; his fortitude is

styled "the Apostle whom Jesus loved \*." John was the congenial friend of his soul; and dear to him, as Jonathan was to David.

Stripped of the sweet domestic affections, and destitute of the love of friends or kindred, how naked, desolate and cheerless would the heart of man be!!! Where, in misery, should we seek for refuge or for sympathy, if the benevolent system of some late moralists were to be permitted to freeze into a cold, insensate mass every warm drop of happiness which is instilled into the heart, by the tender connexions of family and of friendship?

No man can live long in the world, without contracting some individual attachments. A

no sooner put to the test, than he even denies all knowledge of Jesus; and, like most persons who are conscious of falsehood, he endeavours to strengthen the weakness of his assertions, by the effrontery of oaths and the wickedness of perjuries.—But observe the rapid vicissitude of sensations! *One look* from his suffering master, whom he had so lately and so resolutely despised, was sufficient to melt him into tears and to rend him with remorse.—"He went out, and wept bitterly."—Such was Peter! and such, alas! is too often the chequered image of those, who are most renowned for their virtue or their piety!

\* The character of John, which rendered him worthy of being beloved by Jesus, seems to have been distinguished by the most amiable benevolence. His Epistles inculcate love to mankind, as the sum of all religion. See 1 John iii, 11, 14, 17, 18, 23; and iv. 7, 8, 11, 12, 16, 20, 21.

congeniality of sentiments, or of manners, among those with whom we mingle in the intercourse of life, will, naturally, excite a stronger degree of affection towards them, than towards others. Though friendship may subsist, and perhaps with great liveliness of sensation, where there are some few dissimilitudes of temper, of genius and manners, yet it cannot be cemented among those, between whom there is, in those respects, a total and irreconcilable discordancy.—Friendship derives its energy and its spirit from the power of sympathy. We naturally love those most, in whose company we enjoy the greatest degree of pleasurable sensation; and this we certainly must do, with those whose habits approach the nearest to our own; with whom we can indulge a bland communion of happiness, to whom we can impart our joys and sorrows, sure of their exciting corresponding vibrations in their sympathetic bosoms.

It is observable, that those of the same family are usually most attached to each other, who are most associated in the intercourse of childhood. Constant intercourse tends to wear away the asperities and dissimilitudes of disposition, in which they differ from each other, as individuals; and to bring them, in some measure, to a common likeness. It strengthens the affections of kindred, by the more powerful



influence of sympathy. Brothers and sisters, who see little of each other, and, in whom, the ties of nature are not invigorated by a constant and endearing intercourse, and, particularly, at that period when the heart is most sensitive to tender impressions, most ready to assimilate itself to the dispositions of those around it, and to be cast, as it were, anew, in the mould of association, have seldom any more than a very slight regard for each other ;—a regard that may be just kept alive by a sense of duty ; but which glows not with the fondness of love. Affection arises from frequently placing ourselves in the situations of others, from being allotted to share in their joys and sorrows, from a kind interchange of sentiments and interests, from the impalpable agency of a thousand nameless sympathetic attractions, and is therefore chilled and withered without continual intercourse.

Friendship, when it is warm, genuine and sincere, partakes in a great measure of the sacredness of the kindred affections. It supposes an identity of interests, a communion of sensations, a reciprocity of love. Our friend is to us as a brother.

Jesus well knew that a tender and reciprocal friendship can gladden the melancholy path of human life. He therefore sanctioned, by his

example, that pure flame of private friendship, which inspires different persons with an identity of interests, and which, while it increases the happiness of individuals, need substract nothing from the sum of general benevolence.

That Jesus was neither an enemy nor a stranger to the tender sympathies, we may learn from various parts of the Evangelic memoirs; and, particularly, from his behaviour on the occasion of Lazarus's death, which is related in John xi. and which places the messenger of immortality in a light equally amiable and interesting.

The Evangelist tells us, in his plain and artless way, that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Lazarus being taken ill, his sisters sent Jesus this concise but affecting message. "*Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick.*" More, certainly, was not wanting to work on our Saviour's tenderness. Of course, we might expect to read, that he hastened, without delay, to the sick bed of his friend.—No; he waited two days in the place where he was.—But was it apathy? was it insensibility to the call of suffering friendship?—No; the delay was certainly as painful to Jesus as it was to the sisters of Lazarus.—But Providence never sends his sunshine but in the fittest seasons; and Jesus manifested the wisdom as well as the goodness of his father, who often sees it

best; for awhile, to withhold his blessings, even from those whom he loves.

In the mean time Lazarus died. Had Jesus been present, he knew that he could not have resisted the languishing looks of his friend, or the solicitations of his sisters, to save him ere he died. —He therefore prudently declined going to the house till after his death. This is plainly intimated in the speech of Jesus to his disciples. “I am glad,” said he, “for your sakes, that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.”

Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him; but Mary sat still. —By the by, how well does this little incident mark the characteristic eagerness of Martha, and the grayer and more pensive turn of Mary? and how well does it agree with what St. Luke x. has related of the two sisters; of whom Martha is said to be “cumbered about much serving,” while Mary “sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word?” —How well is the unity of characters supported in the four Evangelists; and what can better prove that they are not the historians of fiction but of facts; and that they had seen and conversed with the persons they describe? —To pass from this digression: “Lord, if thou hadst been here,” said Martha, to Jesus, with her natural impatience,

“ my brother had not died ! ” — “ Thy brother,” said Jesus, “ shall rise again ; ” and again he gives the same assurance, with more than usual energy and solemnity. “ I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. ” — Martha now left Jesus to call her sister Mary, who, “ when she had come where Jesus was, and saw him, fell down at his feet ; saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died ! ” — When Jesus beheld Mary, her sister, and their friends overwhelmed in misery, he seems to have been deeply affected. The Evangelist describes his grief in these plain but strong terms. “ He groaned in the spirit and was troubled ; ” and again “ Jesus wept ! ” Overcome by the tenderness of his nature, he could not restrain the sigh of sympathy or the tear of friendship. The violence of his sorrow seems to have excited the notice of the Jews ; who, either from the sudden impulse of admiration or of envy, exclaimed : “ Behold, *how* he loved him ! ” — Jesus now, “ groaning in the spirit,” goes up to the tomb, in which his friend was laid, and exclaims, in a voice which, at the last hour, will awaken the myriads of myriads that have passed into the regions of forgetfulness, “ Lazarus, come forth. ” In an instant, the spirit of life returned to the body, which had begun to pass into corruption.

The behaviour of Jesus, in this scene of affliction, speaks, in the most captivating manner, the tenderness of his feelings, and the warmth of his affections.—His friendship was not a sickly and transitory glow of fondness, the mere vapour of caprice, or the ebullition of appetite;—it did not originate from a familiarity in vice, nor was it polluted by the base alloy of venality and interest.—It was a friendship excited by sympathy, cherished by benevolence and preserved by esteem.—It was formed of elements, not perishable, but immortal;—a friendship, which death does not extinguish; but only transfers it into some happier country; and places it in circumstances more genial to its growth, and more auspicious to its expansion; where no storms can shake the firmness of its roots, and no blights wither the beauty of its branches.

As Jesus was not insensible to friendship, neither was he callous to the affections, which ought to unite kindred blood.—When agonizing on the cross, his own pains did not make him forgetful of his mortal mother. He saw her standing by his cross; the thought of her destitute condition awakened his sympathy; and he commended her, with peculiar earnestness, to the care of his beloved disciple. “Behold,” said he to the Evangelist, “thy mother!” The most elaborate recommendation could not have said more; and



more was not necessary to be said, to make the Apostle feel the love of a son for the mother of his dying master.

Providence, by having distributed mankind into families, and willed the relations of husband and wife, father and child, of brother and sister, hath impressed the seal of sacredness on the kindred affections. But though nature has sown the seeds of these affections, yet they will not shoot up and blossom without careful cultivation. They require the benign and fostering breath of sympathy, to bring them to a vigorous maturity, and to enable them to stand against the changes and inclemencies of life. But the kindred affections, when they have been strengthened by a long and continued interchange of kindnesses, and by a multiplicity of agreeable associations, are a source of pure and exquisite happiness. They resemble that fragrant incense of piety, which the Spirit of love wafts from the heart of the righteous to the throne of the Eternal.

Of all the affections which can warm the heart of man, that of conjugal love, which unites the blandishments of all the kindred charities, with a thousand additional captivations, seems the best adapted to increase the sum of human happiness. Perhaps, on no occasion, did Jesus more clearly demonstrate his knowledge of the genuine source

of social and domestic bliss, than in the restraints which he imposed on the nuptial union. He did not consider marriage as a mere transient association, to be formed as the appetite prompts, and to be dissolved as it decays.

Our Saviour evidently considers marriage as a religious obligation. He says, Matt. xix. 6. "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." He here consecrates the relations of man and wife, by the sanctions of the divine law; which is superior in force to any civil institutions.—Civil institutions may prescribe the outward form, according to which, marriage shall be celebrated; but the outward form, by no means, constitutes the sacredness of marriage in a religious view. The outward form gives the sanction of decency to the union of the sexes; but that union, will still partake of the essence of prostitution, unless it be associated with the inward sense of a divine obligation, feelingly impressed on the conscience of the contracting parties. Wherever matrimony is entered into without any religious considerations of the moral duties it enjoins, it is a sensual, profane and unhallowed connexion.

Regarding marriage on Christian principles, nothing but actual adultery can justify its dissolution; and, in all cases, adultery, wherever it is

clearly established, ought, instantly, to cancel the validity of the marriage.—Nay, in the eye of the Almighty, one adulterous desire, breathing it's pollution on the heart, stains it with the guilt of adultery. . Matt. v. 28.

Were we to regard marriage without any relation to the divine law or to the Christian sanctions, as a mere civil contract, then there would, no longer, be any reason, why it should not cease when it became mutually disagreeable to the parties concerned; when it disappointed their mutual expectations, and they ceased to will it's continuance. In this case, a mere incompatibility of temper, would be a sufficient ground for a divorce. But to allow this, would be to offer a premium upon the universality of prostitution; and to make the nuptials of mankind as transient as those of the brutes.

The disposition of individuals is as various as their features. No two tempers can be precisely similar; and a difference in this respect, is no better argument for a divorce, than a difference of complexion. The tender associations of familiar intercourse, where marriage is entered into, with a sense of it's religious obligations, soon wear away the discrepancies of the most discordant tempers; and smooth off the harsh incongruities of taste and manners. Both parties will

consent to forego their mutual asperities, by a mutual accommodation.

Whether we regard it in it's political importance, or in it's subserviency to social and individual bliss, the marriage-tie cannot be considered as too sacred. It is marriage which renovates the world. It is the trunk, from which germinate all the domestic charities, that bear the fruits of happiness.

Those who would divest matrimony of its religious functions, would strip it of all it's moral, and even wither the bloom of it's physical attractions. It would soon sink into a debased and brutal connexion; a sordid league for avarice or for lust.

It is not the mere name or ceremony of marriage, that renders it sacred. Every marriage, which is not contracted from a sense of mutual esteem, which is not sublimed by the endearments of sympathy, and hallowed by the spirit of piety, is vitally and essentially prostitution. The only true and genuine marriage, is that which is an union of mind and soul, as well as appetite; not springing from the inconsiderate tumult of passion, but the considerate tranquillity of esteem; not volatile, but permanent; not exhaled from humour and whim, but combined

with all the best affections of the heart; and fastened on the conscience, by the glorifying energies of religion.

In the brutes, there is nothing which can deserve the name of conjugal affection. Their union terminates with the impulse of the moment. In man it is far otherwise.—In man, conjugal love assumes a moral complexion. A thousand associations, blend it with a thousand captivations. It is refined by sympathy; it is sublimed by fancy; till, losing half it's animal grossness, it resembles the delicate intercourse of purer spirits.

In man, the imagination, inspired by the passion of love, adorns the beloved object with numberless attractions; and forms a picture of perfection incompatible with the frailties of humanity.—But the time, at last, comes when the first warm transports of sensibility yield to calmer emotions; the conjugal tie, familiarised, breaks the spell of the enchantress.

Then, when experience shades with traces of frailty the blameless picture which fancy drew,—then happy is it, if, when the first blaze of transport is over, it leave behind it, that bland warmth of mutual esteem, which lasts through life, at that medium of temperature, which is equally distant



from rapturous fondness, and from negligent indifference.

The ravished inquietudes of sensation, and the ecstasies of imagination, are too violent to be lasting; but that mutual esteem which is spiritualised by the breath of religion, will survive the gay illusions of fancy; and, instead of being abated, will be increased, as time nips the bloom of youth, and the heart grows chill with the touch of age.—Nay, it is probable that the pure and genuine flame of affection, which identified the interests and the sensations of two hearts, on this earth, will shine for ever in a better country. Death will not dissolve the true undisssembled union of souls.—Hence, then, take comfort, thou wretched mourner, who art following to the grave one, who was long the fond companion of thy travel in this waste of misery!

Our Saviour said, that, in heaven, they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are like the angels. The physical bonds of love will perish in the grave; but it's moral bonds—the delicate energies of sympathy—will be everlasting.

As there are some affections which attach us to individuals, so there are others which connect us, by bonds of tenderness, with the great mass

of society. As we are sensible to the glow of filial, parental, conjugal and friendly love, so we ought to be alive to the patriotic affections, which incline our hearts to sympathise with the welfare of the community, to which we belong, and of the country, in which we were born.

Some have, indeed, thought that the heat of patriotism, which a good man feels for the welfare of his native country, ought to be extinguished in the spirit of more comprehensive patriotism, which attaches him to the universal welfare of his species; without any partial or peculiar concern for the people, among whom he was bred, or the country, in which he was born.

But, I think, that no man, unless he have wandered, from his very infancy, like a vagabond, over the earth, without ever tasting or communicating the comforts of domestic society, can well overcome those early associations, which endear him to the fields of his youth; and which, as it were, assimilate his nature to the language, to the manners, and the interests of his native country. For that country can he refrain from burning with some sparks of a peculiar fondness? Is such a partiality criminal? Is it not rather a virtue, which association produces, but which heaven approves? For, among every people, of every

clime, whether barbarous or civilised, whether inhabiting spots of luxuriant fertility, or of eternal barrenness, the love of the "natale solum" has ever been a predominant passion: of which the extinction would cover the various regions of the earth with shades of melancholy, and dry up the perennial source of their interest, their captivations and their charms\*. That philosophy,

\* The power of association, over the affections, will be seen in the instance which I am going to mention, from Captain Cooke's last voyage to the Pacific Ocean. On Captain Clerke's arrival at the town of St. Peter and St. Paul, in Kamtschatka, Mr. King, Mr. Webster and others were dispatched to the commanding officer, at Bolcheretsk; on their way, they were hospitably entertained, at the little village of Karatchin. Whilst they were dining, in a miserable hut, the guests of absolute strangers, and at the extremity of the habitable globe, a solitary half-worn pewter spoon soon attracted their attention. "It's form," says the narrator, "was familiar to us; and the word London was stamped upon the back of it. It is impossible to express the anxious hopes and tender remembrances this excited in us. Those, who have been long absent from their native country, will readily conceive what inexpressible pleasure such trifling incidents can give."

On the subject of association, I shall dwell a little longer. Most of our pleasures are derived from this source. In the views of nature, many prospects excite agreeable sensations, which have nothing beautiful in themselves; and, for which, no other cause can be assigned, than that these prospects bear a resemblance to those which were connected by us, in our infancy, with agreeable sensations. These sensations were excited by causes foreign to the beauty of the view itself; but which, in the lapse of time, have been intimately blended with

therefore, appears to me of a pernicious cast, which would reduce the affections to an uniform level; which would make an Englishman, as zealous for the prosperity of France, or of China,

it, and become parts of it. Similar views then produce the very sensations, which originated from associated ideas. The sight of fields, which, in their form and position, resemble those in which our early days were spent, would inspire us with delightful emotions; and, at first, without our knowing why; for, we should not immediately recollect the similitude. Ideas of pleasure, having been associated with particular forms, or with this or that disposition of country, are subject to frequent revival, when the causes which first produced them are forgotten.—We generally attach the idea of beauty to smooth undulating surfaces; and the contemplation of them raises, in the heart, feelings that please. The first pleasures of men are excited by their mothers breast;—the agreeable sensations which the infant experiences in sucking, are, afterwards, attached to the softness, smoothness and whiteness of the milky fountain. His eyes feast on it with placid rapture; his little fingers move, in various directions, gently, over the swelling breast. Surfaces that have similar spiral and waving lines, afterwards excite similar emotions.—There is, perhaps, nothing either beautiful or ugly, but as it is associated with ideas of pleasure or aversion, or with circumstances which have, some way or other, interested our feelings, or influenced our enjoyments.

A good-natured German, in a journey, which he made on foot, through several parts of England, says—"When I was past Bakewell, a place far inferior to Derby, I came by the side of a broad river, to a small eminence, where a fine cultivated field lay before me. This field, all at once, made an indescribable and very pleasing impression on me; *which, at*

for Siberia, as for that of Britain; and extinguish the partial flame of all local sympathies.

Patriotism, like extension, must begin at a point; but may be increased, by gradual diffusion, till it becomes a philanthropy, that knows no other limits than the limits of nature. But as the circulation near the heart is more warm, fresh and vigorous than at the extremities, so, every man's affection for his native country ought to be more fervent and vivid, than that philanthropic heat which may interest him in the happiness of distant regions.

A good Christian will be a citizen of his own country, before he will claim the too often affected appellation of a citizen of the world; a name frequently abused to disguise a base insensibility to the best affections of the human heart.

But, though a good Christian will glory in a partial fondness for his own country, still he will feel a lively interest for the happiness of other nations. He will love justice and benevo-

*first, I could not account for; till I recollected having seen, in my childhood, near the village where I was educated, a situation strikingly similar to that now before me in England. See Travels by C. P. Moritz. 12mo, Robinsons.—See likewise Zoonoma. Vol. i. 145.*



lence even more than his country ; and he will never consent to violate these sacred principles, though, by the violation, he might increase her opulence or her grandeur.

It is a very common notion, that kingdoms sink in misfortune, in proportion as their neighbours rise in prosperity.—Hence, that mean jealousy and rivalry, that separate and imbitter the great brotherhood of mankind. Hence, so much bloodshed, and so many wars.—Nations do not consider that they ought rather to rejoice at, than to lament the increase of each other's wealth and happiness.

Prosperity is not confined to one single channel ; it has numerous channels, which communicate with and assist each other. The prosperity of our neighbours always tends, sooner or later, to augment our own.

The want of that benevolence, which is of the true Christian sort, prevents states as well as individuals from discerning their real and essential interest. Most nations thirst, with the greediness of monopolists, for an exclusive commerce ; of which they may prevent their neighbours from any participation of the advantages. But this is a delusive policy, which promises great and produces little benefit. *For, it is for*

*the good of mankind, that prosperity should run in many channels; as the power of it's production is always increased, in proportion to the multiplication of it's sources.*

Nations, at present, boast most loudly of turning the balance of trade against each other; but, I trust that the time is approaching, when the rivalry of avarice shall be extinguished; and kingdoms shall look for glory only in the rivalry of benevolence,

To enrich his native country, a good Christian will never be an advocate for oppressing a weaker neighbour; he will scorn to carry fire and sword, devastation and murder, into a foreign kingdom, to promote the fancied glory or security of his own. A good Christian will consider war as murder, with an infinite aggravation of it's atrocity; and he will refuse to unsheath the sword, except in the single case of the aggressions of tyranny, either from without or from within; and then he will cheerfully hazard his fortune, and shed his blood in the defence of his country, and for the preservation of her liberties and her laws.

Such will be a good political Christian; such we may without any impiety, imagine that Jesus

would have been\*, were he living on earth, as a man, in the society of men. In his character,

\* Some divines have endeavoured to persuade us, that the Author of Christianity was an advocate for passive political servitude.—In the whole compass of the Evangelic memoirs, I know but one passage, which has any direct relation to the important topic of civil obedience.—The Jews having asked Jesus, whether it were lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not. He replied, “Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar’s; then saith he unto them, *Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar’s; and unto God, the things that are God’s.*” In the first place: “Render unto Cæsar, &c.” means, give to Cæsar *his just dues*; but then this point remains to be considered. *What are the just dues of Cæsar?* And this question is not to be determined by the arbitrary will of Cæsar, but by the considerations of religion, of justice and humanity. Were we to permit Cæsar to determine his own rights and prerogative, according to his own caprice, we give him a license to trample on the sacred rights of conscience and of justice. This was not the intention of Jesus; for he has qualified the obedience commanded in the first part of the sentence, “Render, &c.” by the restriction which is employed in the last,—“*but unto God the things that are God’s.*”

A good Christian will certainly pay tribute, to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, honour to whom honour; but if obedience be demanded of him, in cases where he cannot conscientiously pay it, he will courageously resist the tyranny that demands it. He will “not fear him who can kill the body, but him who can destroy both body and soul in hell.”

Man was not made by heaven for a slave. This truth is written, by the hand of God, on every man’s heart; and it

we meet with several traits of that national attachment which is the essence of patriotism. In Luke xix. we read, that Jesus, descending from the Mount of Olives, wept when he beheld the city, and the temple which was the boast of every Jew, and the glory of his native land; but which he knew would, in a few years, present only a melancholy scene of ruin and devastation. This thought roused an exclamation of patriotic sympathy. "Would thou had known," said he, "even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!—But now they are hid from thine eyes!" The storm of divine fury, which was gathering against his country, he saw; and he struggled in vain to avert, by reformation and repentance. His countrymen were blind to the danger, and insensible to his exhortations. But Jesus, unable to bring the Jews to a serious sense of the calamities, which were impending over them, and to open their eyes to the light of the gospel of immortality, instead of execrating, with bitterness, lamented with tenderness their blindness and depravity. "O Jerusalem," said he, "O Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often

is a palpable and self-evident proposition to every one, whose mind has not been totally imbruted by long continued habits of obsequiousness to the scourge of slavery, and the lash of oppression.

would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matt. xxiii. With artless but impassioned eloquence, he mourned over the wilful obstinacy of his beloved city. He discovers the fervency of a patriot, whose affections centre in the welfare of his country; and whose soul breathes the warmest wishes for it's prosperity.

A good Christian will be a strenuous defender of public virtue and public piety. He will regard the decay of morality and of religion, as the greatest calamity that can befall his country; and as the sure indication of a declining empire. He, who, in a public station, can countenance the least relaxation of public integrity, or abet the abasement of the national character, by any acts of injustice or of inhumanity, by the violation of any one social or sacred tie, is no Christian, but an enemy to Christianity. A good Christian will glow with an honest zeal, to preserve the religion which he venerates from any contaminating mixture—from hypocrisy and from bigotry—from that foppishness of worship, which mocks the Supreme Intelligence—and from that extravagance and enthusiasm, which conceals the light of heaven under clouds and darkness.

Christianity has been frequently, though I trust



undesignedly, injured by those who are sometimes falsely styled Evangelical preachers; who, losing sight of the rational practice of the gospel, talk of nothing but what they call it's doctrines; but of which, it is plain, that as they know nothing themselves, they cannot make them clear to others. By pretending to explain those things, of which they have no distinct and definite ideas, they are betrayed into the grossest inconsistencies, and often the most ludicrous absurdities. The sublime morality which Jesus inculcated, and which impresses the spirit of charity by the most awful sanctions, they pass over in contemptuous silence; while they vainly labour to *unfold the dark covering of the ark* of the Christian mysteries\*.

\* The turn of these expressions is borrowed from a MS. of Chatterton, in which he makes the fictitious Rowley offer to refute "at St. Mark's cross, in the church-yard of St. Mary Redcleff," in Bristol, the heretical notions of John a Milverton, who seems to have embraced the doctrines of Socinus. The passage I allude to, is as follows: "It is in vain for the wit of man, to pretend to unfold the dark covering of the ark of the Trinity; lest, like those of old, he be stricken dead and his reason lost, by breathing in an element too fine and subtle for his gross nature."

I shall here say something on the subject of the Pseudo-Rowley,—a subject to which I have given much attention; as is well known to my friends; and particularly my much esteemed friend, Charles Gower, M. D. of Oriel College; a gentleman distinguished by the integrity of his conduct, the

As the pretended Evangelical preachers affect to preach nothing but Jesus, it is strange that

openness and kindness of his heart, and the diversified copiousness of his erudition.

Thomas Chatterton, one of the most extraordinary personages that has appeared in the present century, was born at Bristol, Nov. 20, 1752. His predilection for antiquities was excited in his childhood. He seems, likewise, when almost an infant, to have imbibed a passion for fame, and a thirst for distinction. Traces of this were visible in his earliest intercourse.

He always ambitiously sought the post of pre-eminence among his play-fellows. He was not willing to consider them as his equals; he would have them his servants. How often might the dawn of character be observed in the sports and amusements of youth?

In the mind of young Chatterton, the love of pre-eminence was an impetuous and ruling passion. It imparted an unwearied activity to the energies of his mind; and inspired him with vigour, to resist that lassitude which arises from incessant exertion. In his meals, he used an almost ascetic abstinence; and he slept but little. The greater part of every night he devoted to the multiform occupations of genius; his unquenchable passion for fame almost enabled him to counteract the ordinary calls of nature for repose; and without a considerable portion of which common mortals would soon expire.

To the early thirst of Chatterton for distinction, and which, more fortunately for the world than for himself, took a literary direction, I attribute his forgery of the poems attributed to Rowley. He well knew that any poems, appearing in his own name, and as the productions of a parish-boy, would have excited but little attention; and he certainly could not hope that they would cause his reputation to emerge

they should so rarely recommend to the imitation and the practice of their followers, the striking

from the bosom of obscurity. But he thought that the publication of poems, said to have been written in the fifteenth century, and with all the harmony of numbers, which is perceptible in the writers of the eighteenth, would be a literary phenomenon well calculated to excite general curiosity. Even in Bristol, where the heart is too usually dormant to any emotions, but to those of gain or of voluptuousness, a few sparks of curiosity and of interest were elicited; and Chatterton found the shadow of patronage (alas! it was but the shadow!) in a surgeon and a pewterer.

Another motive, which operated to the production of this wonderful forgery, was the desire of the young author to gratify his vanity, by imposing on the learned world. This he did most effectually. The garb of antiquity, which he assumed, seems to have deceived some of the most profound antiquaries; and the genuineness of the poems, might, to this day, have remained a matter of ambiguity, if the forgery of Chatterton had not been indisputably established by the taste of Warton, and the precise and penetrating erudition of Tyrwhit.

The most remarkable circumstance, in the life of Chatterton, is the early maturity of his mind. His intellect, unlike the intellect of most men, does not seem to have attained its greatness by a slow and gradual, but a rapid and almost instantaneous expansion.—Of that taste, whose divine irradiations are dispensed to none but the man of genius,—of that taste, which is a subtle and delicate emanation from a sound judgment, quick perceptions and a vigorous intelligence, and which bestows the power of discerning beauties that are invisible to vulgar apprehensions, and of forming combinations which strike universally by their justness or dazzle by their splendour,—Chatterton possessed a more than common share, at a premature period.

lineaments of his character, and the most prominent features of his doctrine! In a cant

At the age of sixteen, he produced the tragedy of *Ælla*; in which there are the marks of a mind vigorous in pursuit, powerful in combination and delicate in selection.—In the perusal of *Ælla*, who, that can sympathise with the varied agitations of the human breast, can refrain from experiencing alternate emotions of softness and of magnanimity—now melted by the tenderness of *Birtha*, now elevated by the heroism of *Ælla*? In the parting scene, which is ably managed, the spirit of the warrior predominates over that of the lover; while *Birtha*, an exquisitely winning portrait of female frailty, is carried resistlessly down the stream of her sensations.—The song of the minstrel is remarkable for its simplicity, its sweetness and pathos.

*"Come with a corne-coppe and thorne,*

*Drayne mie heartys blodde awaie;*

*Lyfe and all yttes goode I scorne,*

*Daunce bie nete, or feaste by daie.*

*My love ys dedde,*

*Gon to hys death-bedde*

*All under the wyllow tree.*

*Ec. Ec."*

In "the Fragment of Godwin," the chorus of Freedom would not have disgraced the lyre of Gray. In the battle of Hastings, amid a profusion of similes and metaphors, the exuberance of a juvenile imagination, there are examples of the true sublime. "The Ballad of Charity" cannot be read without tender emotions; for imagination instantly suggests that the wretchedness of the poet, was signified in that of the pilgrim.

To form a true estimate of the genius of Chatterton, we must not forget that the beauties of his poetry, are less resplendent, than they otherwise would be, from the per-

unmeaning jargon, they talk much of vital faith ;  
but they say little of vital benevolence ; without

verted and antiquated diction, and the often barbarous and incongruous idiom, by which they are obscured. Many of the words used by Chatterton, were the coinage of his own fancy ; others are distorted from their common and regular acceptation in ancient writers ; and the elegance of modern phraseology is blended with the factitious incrustations of antiquity.

The sensations which we experience in perusing some of the best of our ancient poets, are not unlike those which will be felt by a man of a cultivated sensibility, who walks in a Gothic aisle, when the rays of the moon are gleaming on the chambers of the dead ; but those which we imbibe from the poetry of Chatterton, though they have less solemnity, have something more of softness, as if we were sitting in an ancient choir, and were now inspired by the grandeur of the scene—now melted by the sweetness of the harmony.—The genuine poet, is known by the degree of energy, with which he can influence our sensations, and make them respond to his master volition ; who powerfully touches the chords of our hearts, and deprives us of the possession of ourselves. A second-rate poet only plays about the heart ; but a poet of the first order, like Shakespeare in many passages, and like Chatterton in a few, storms every avenue of the soul ; and makes us glow with enthusiasm, or sadden with despair.

The genius of Chatterton languished in the atmosphere of Bristol ; his productions were not to the taste of the merchants, who were wallowing in the luxury of wealth ; while the poet was suffered to feel the piercing anguish of penury and of scorn. He, accordingly, accepted the offers of some London Booksellers, who invited him to the metropolis. In April, 1770, he left his native city ; glowing, probably, with those gay illusions of fame and fortune, with which hope is continually cheating the burning fancy of youth. But the fond expecta-



which faith can be but a sound. How different their discourses from the discourses of Jesus ! The instructions of Jesus, combine the purest morals, with calm and sober but solemn devotion. They teach love as the essential principle of piety. They do not found salvation, on the shadowy base of a faith in doctrines which are inscrutable to the wit of man, and equally obscure to the ignorant and the wise.

Mr. Wilberforce, in his View of Christianity, seems to suppose, that a steady and undoubting conviction of the inborn and radical corruption of the human heart, is the foundation-stone of righteousness. In the 12mo. edit. of 1797. p. 18. Mr. Wilberforce says of man, that he is

tions of poor Chatterton were never realized ; and distracted with the recollection of past neglect, and the prospect of future misery, he took poison on the evening of the 24th of August, 1770, of which he expired the next morning, when he wanted almost three months to complete his eighteenth year !!!

Mr. Warton has observed, that Chaucer is like a genial day, in an English spring ; but Chatterton appears to resemble a meteor seen in a summer sky ; which passes away too soon for all it's deviations to be noted, or all it's lustre to be ascertained.

To this note I shall only add, that, in the year 1790, I saw the mother and sister of Chatterton. The mother was very infirm and sickly ; the sister kept a day-school, and had, I think, one little daughter. They were in indigent circumstances !

"tainted with sin, not slightly and superficially, but radically and to the very core." And in p. 32, he says, "It is here," (*viz.* in the doctrine of the original and innate corruption of mankind): "never let it be forgotten, *that our foundation must be laid; otherwise our superstructure, whatever we may think of it, will one day or other prove tottering and insecure.*"

It is surely strange, that our hopes of salvation must be precarious and insecure, before we have debased our natural sense of justice so far, as to give a cordial assent to the doctrine of imputed sin. Can any man, in his senses, and the exercise of whose understanding is not palsied by the dwarfish cowardice of superstition, acquiesce in the notion of inbred and inalienable guilt? Does sin consist, not in sinning, but in passing our mother's womb?

Our mere descent from Adam, does not make us sinful; nor, *till we have sinned in our own persons*, can we be worthy objects of divine punishment. That, as the descendants of Adam, we are born under a curse, I can safely allow; but what is the curse?—Not, surely, the curse of eternal damnation, or of imputed sin, but the curse of being mortal.—We are all subject to death, which we might not have been, if Adam had not sinned. "Dust thou art, and unto dust

thou shalt return," was the curse passed upon Adam, on account of his transgression; and this curse, which was passed on him, is entailed on his latest posterity. Adam, being made mortal, could not certainly transmit immortal energies to those who came after him.

Let us now consider the law, to which Adam was subject in Paradise. He was made immortal on certain conditions; and these conditions were to him a law, which he was bound not to disobey. "Of every tree in the garden," said the Lord to Adam, "thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for, in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

As Adam was threatened with death, in case he eat of the forbidden fruit, we must necessarily infer that if he had not eaten of it, he would not have died.—But he had no sooner transgressed the covenant, by adhering to which he might have remained immortal, and exempt from pain and disease, than he became mortal, and subject to those pains and miseries, and various bodily infirmities which are essential to a state of mortality, and which, by wasting the power of the body, hasten it's dissolution.—The consequences, therefore, in which the disobedience of

Adam involved his posterity, are these;—pain, disease, and death!

The sentence of eternal damnation, was not only not passed upon Adam and his descendants, but, at the very moment that the sentence of death and the decree of mortality was pronounced against them, a hope was held out to them;—a hope which was, indeed, at first, faint and dubious, but which gradually grew clearer, as the star of Jacob approached the horizon,—that the Almighty would, under the influence of the second Adam, restore the sons of men to those immortal privileges, which they would have possessed, if the first Adam had not sinned.

“ I will,” said the Lord to the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. “ put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Here was an intimation, dark indeed and mysterious, but, not without gleams of solace, given to our first parents—that they should hereafter, in the person of one of their descendants, punish the serpent, by whose guile they had been betrayed; and that the wound, under which they languished, should not be incurable. This is not obscurely signified, by the wound itself being represented as a bruise only upon the heel, and not on any vital part.—Thus we see that

Adam was punished for his transgression by temporary ills, and by death, which is itself only a temporary ill; but that the consolatory prospect of a life after death, and a repeal of the sentence passed on him was dimly shadowed forth to him.

How then can it be said, with the least show of truth, that we are by nature, and as it were, in right of our descent from Adam, heirs of eternal wrath and worthy of eternal misery? For we see that the sentence passed on Adam himself was nothing more than death temporal, and short-lived misery.

If the consequences of Adam's transgression be entailed on his posterity, those consequences may be summed up in the mortality of our bodies. "In Adam all die;" as the Apostle said; but to pretend that we are all vile and guilty in the sight of God, merely from having been born of Adam (a thing, by the by, which we had no means of preventing), is to assert what is as repugnant to Scripture as it is to reason. It seems, indeed, a downright absurdity, to suppose, with Mr. W. that we are, by nature, necessarily and inherently sinners; that sin has been incorporated in every drop of blood that flows in the heart, and in every fibre that constitutes the tissue of the human frame.



Sin, means a wilful violation of the laws of God; and is the voluntary perversion of that faculty which enables us to distinguish between good and evil. Moral guilt, implies a concomitant consciousness of duty; and where this consciousness is not, as it certainly is not either in infants or in idiots, there can be no guilt. Moral depravity, signifies depraved affections and habits of acting; and *which are not innate but acquired.*

To teach people that they are morally and essentially guilty, before they have committed sin, and doomed to eternal punishment, before they have done any thing to deserve any punishment at all, can only tend to give the most confused notions of moral virtue, to destroy the vital spirit of human rectitude, and to excite the most unworthy ideas of the Supreme Being;—as of a malicious Demon, bringing myriads of sentient creatures into existence, on purpose to torture them to everlasting ages.

Those vicious propensities, in which original sin is thought to consist, are evidently not innate but acquired; not the spontaneous growth of nature but the product of habit. The advocates for the naturally and radically diseased state of the moral part of human nature, often adduce the wayward peevishness and the mischievous

cruelty which are sometimes observable in children, as infallible marks of it's existence.—But the breast seems, with respect to it's original exemption from moral pollution, to be pure as crystal water; though it seldom continues long without imbibing some taint from the contagious atmosphere around it.

Man is born imitative; and the imitative faculty is most predominant in infancy, from the greater irritability, and, as it were, lubricity of the fibres of sense and motion, and the greater facility with which the power of association is exerted, and which is proved by the lasting and indelible influence of it's primitive operations.

The education of children is never begun so soon as it ought to be. The impressions made on their delicate and exquisitely sensible frame, in that interval, when the senses unfold their activity, and the first spark of mental perception begins to kindle, to the period of five or six years of age, may be modified, but *can never be totally effaced by any after-education.* They give an unchangeable bent and direction to every faculty; they are the mould in which the whole subsequent character is cast; *they fix the genius of the mind, and the morality of the heart.*—Would but mothers, who are the best instructors and guardians of infancy, never suffer their children to be

reared at any bosom but their own, would they pay more attention to the cradle than to the toilet, would they watch with religious assiduity the first effervescence of the passions, would they strive to repress in their offspring the first apparent germ of malevolent sensation, would they discourage, by persuasion and by punishment, the smallest deviation from truth, would they but temper severity with tenderness, and generate obedience by love,—I am impressed with a firm conviction that the great mass of that corruption, which is now so visible in the world, and which is so hastily imputed to hereditary depravity, would vanish away; and it would be found that we have been falsely criminating Adam for the errors of the nursery.

Man seems to come into the world a soft, docile and pliable creature, ready to assume any shape, into which those, who have the care of his education, may choose to fashion him, or to which fortuitous circumstances (whose influence, which is carefully watched and corrected in a good, is *all-powerful in a neglected education*) may give him a direction.—*The moral state of infancy is not naturally a morbid, but a healthy one*;—a state, in which the seeds of every virtue may be sown, on which the scyons of every habit may be grafted, which can delight in youth or bear fruit in age,

Since the fall, the earth will not yield her increase without diligent cultivation. Thorns will spring up in the path that is neglected by the hand of human industry. But the labours of tillage will turn the waste into a garden, and make the desert smile with verdure. In the same manner, in the moral world education is necessary; and, the order of things is so wisely arranged, that, in this species of culture, industry seldom fails of its reward.—Without a kind and assiduous cultivation the faculties of the mind do not unfold their power, or are benumbed for want of exercise; and the affections of the heart must be carefully pruned and refined, or they will soon become sickly by their own luxuriance, or fade and canker with depravity.—The improveability of the heart and affections, and the necessity of their assiduous culture, do not prove that they are naturally depraved, but that they are accessible to depravity.—Were the heart born, according to the theory of the Calvinists, thoroughly and radically vicious, to amend it would be impossible; and even to make the attempt would only be to contend against nature, and to struggle against God. But the rudiments of an imperfect education have a powerful effect on the melioration and improvement of the moral character.—God has permitted us to be subject to a wrong bias, to perverse prejudices, and false associations, as *a strong incitement to moral culture,*

and to induce us to *tend the early growth and expansion of the moral principle.*

In Paradise, 'as we may gather from the brief notices of Scripture, the earth brought forth subsistence with an exuberant beneficence, and without the labour of preparation; and we may suppose that, if Adam had not transgressed the divine will, no more labour would have been necessary in the moral man in the natural world, that the minds of his offspring would have unfolded their energies without the pains of cultivation, and that their hearts would have been in no danger of corruption. There would have been no necessity to attend to the early growth and formation of the moral principle, in order to secure the heart from the corroding influence of evil example, and the instillations of irregular desire. They would have lived and breathed under the constant protection of a celestial influence, and every avenue to depravity would have been closed.

But when the moral law, *which demands an uniform and unremitting obedience to the holy will of God,* was violated, our first parents were banished from the happy region, which *they held only by the tenure of that obedience*—The spontaneous fruitfulness of the soil, and *the uncultured and naturally secure integrity of the moral principle,* dis-



appeared—Man became more exposed to temptation, and less assisted by grace. *He was not conceived in guilt, but in pain and suffering; he was not born in sin, but in a state of great physical infirmity; and, consequently, though he was not, by the original constitution of his nature, more corrupt than Adam, yet being more pervious to temptation, he was more subject to corruption.*

Had the doctrine—that men are by nature sinners, and that guilt is radical and innate in every heart, been an essential part of Christian knowledge, our Saviour would, certainly, have insisted on it, as a preliminary to salvation; and taught it as the rudiments of immortality. He would have represented it as the only rock of Christian safety, instead of conferring eternal life on those who kept the commandments. Matt. xix. 17. In none of his discourses did Jesus inculcate to his followers, the necessity of a conviction in the original and radical corruption of human nature, as that only ground-work of piety, “without which, any superstructure that we might raise *would be tottering and insecure.*” Jesus seems every where to consider men as beings endued with passion and with reason, and susceptible of good as well as of evil.

The first words in which both Jesus and the Apostles seem to have begun their preaching,

were an exhortation to repentance. "Repent ye," was their ordinary exordium. Now, repentance must refer to acquired, not imputed guilt,—that guilt to which the will consented, not that to which it could not be accessary. It would have been madness to require men to repent of that sin which they had no concern in willing; and which was committed many ages anterior to their possession of the faculty of volition.

"I am not," said Jesus, Matt. ix. 13. "come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." This implies that there were some who needed no repentance. Had Jesus been an advocate for the doctrine of radical and inherent depravity, he would not have acknowledged that any were righteous; since, in that case, all must have been equally tainted, if not with personal, at least, with imputed guilt. When it was alledged as a charge against Jesus, that he ate with publicans and sinners. "They that be whole," said he, "need not a phyfician, but they that are sick." Matt. ix. 12. This passage intimates, that that corruption which Mr. Wilberforce deems universal, and innate in the whole mass of mankind, was partial only to individuals; and, by it's being represented under the image of a sickness, we may suppose that Jesus considered it as rather accidental and acquired, than innate and una-

voidable. He seems to have thought the corruption of man rather a secondary than a primary disease; rather a sickness at the extremities than "*at the core*;" rather a local malady, than a total gangrene.

That Jesus did not esteem guilt innate in man, we may, likewise, plainly gather from the concise but impressive eulogy which he pronounced on the *innocence* of little children. "Of *such* is the kingdom of God." He makes the spotless innocence of infancy emblematic of the possessors of the happy mansions. If men are born, as Jesus evidently thought and openly declared, in a state of guiltless innocence, the notion of imputed sin is a mere *chimera*, which ought no longer to be suffered to throw it's bewildering and terrific gloom over the serene beauty of the Christian system\*.

Let it then, henceforth, pass into the silence of oblivion, along with the numerous corruptions of

\* I have dwelt a good deal on this subject; because I am of opinion that thousands and thousands have been prevented from embracing Christianity by the imprudence of divines, in insisting, with so much vehemence, on the necessity of assenting to the doctrine of imputed sin—a doctrine which would found Christian morality on a frail and perishable foundation—a doctrine which militates against the general tenour of Scripture, and which is contrary to the most enlarged notions of the Divine Goodness.

the true gospel by bigotry and superstition. Let us boldly, but reverently, discreetly and soberly, remove this and other incrustations of time, of ignorance and prejudice from the system of Jesus; and let us display the genuine and unvitiated spirit of his religion to the world;—of that religion which is to be found in a fair and liberal interpretation of his discourses and his actions. This seems the only way of determining with precision what is, and what is not, Christianity.—I am well aware that, in delivering these sentiments, I shall render myself obnoxious to those who love to range, with a certain confusedness of mind, in the dark perplexities of mystery, and to forsake the guidance of reason, in the coverts of some inexplicable doctrine.

I do not deny but that texts which seem to favour the doctrine of imputed sin, may be drawn from the writings of St. Paul; but, at the same time, I could produce from the same writings passages of an opposite tendency; and while the epistles of that apostle are so little understood and so liable to inferences, which, perhaps, the Apostle himself never thought of, I think it most safe, as well as wise, in considering any disputed point of doctrine, to confine our attention *solely and exclusively to those points of doctrine which Jesus himself plainly and unequivocally sanctioned by his authority.*

The epistles of St. Paul are interspersed with many useful precepts for the regulation of life and conduct, in the various relations of social intercourse. He sometimes applies the general rules of our Saviour to specific duties. He details the relative obligations of husband and wife, master and servant;—and it ought never to be forgotten, that he has pronounced (1 Cor. xiii.) one of the most comprehensive, beautiful and sublime eulogies on charity, that was ever uttered. Regarding it merely as a specimen of human eloquence, it may vie with the finest passages in the finest productions of Greece or of Rome.

But rules for the conduct of life, or counsels of universal application, form, comparatively, but a small part of the writings of Paul. They are, like rays, thinly scattered through an expanse of mysterious darkness. The major part of his epistles is filled with the abstruse discussions of Rabbinical learning; or relates to questions which are, at present, of more curiosity than importance; though, in his time, they interrupted the harmony of the Christian community, and were debated with eagerness, as points which were connected with an eternal interest. But time has both lessened their interest and darkened their meaning.



The Epistle to the Romans is bewildered with the polemical Christianity of that day; and turns on points which were agitated, with no little vehemence, not only between the unbelieving Jews and the Judaizing Christians, but between the latter and the Gentile converts.

The obscurity of the writings of St. Paul is likewise increased by the intricacy of his style; by the long parentheses, which sometimes interrupt the succession of his ideas; and, at others, seems to perplex and confuse the order of his arguments. He likewise so often reasons in the person of his adversary, that it is probable, that notions have often been imputed to Paul, which he rather combated than defended. He seems likewise, at times, to labour with mysterious meanings; and which he failed in developing with sufficient perspicuity. He was of the sect of the Pharisees, who were wont to allegorise on the literal sense of Scripture. His writings have undoubtedly some tincture of Cabalistical refinement; and it may be doubted whether they do not occasionally glimmer with a ray of Grecian philosophy.

The character of Paul was distinguished by intrepidity and energy. It had no littlenesses, no minute or dwarfish features;—all is force, grandeur and sublimity. He was impatient in pur-

suit; and indefatigable in exertion. Disdaining obstacles, they rather accelerated than retarded his progress. He resembled Cæsar, as characterised by Lucan:—

“ Nil actum reputans dum quid superesset agendum.”

Previous to his conversion, he was a fierce and inexorable, but a conscientious enemy to Christianity. Acts xxvi. Attached, even to bigotry, to the rites of the Mosaic law, he exhibited an implacable rage against the disciples of Jesus. Not content with persecuting them at Jerusalem, his restless spirit pursued them to other cities, whither they had fled for safety. Acts xxvi.

The honest zeal of Paul was not abated by his conversion; it's direction only was altered. It flowed in a different channel, but with equal impetuosity. Of that religion, against which, he had gone to Damascus, breathing threatenings and slaughter, he became the undaunted, the indefatigable and unshaken advocate.

His natural ferocity was tempered by the gentle spirit of his new master. He no longer gave way to the intemperate ebullition of his passions; he did not thirst for the blood of the unbelieving Jews, as he had formerly done, for that of the believing Christians. He exhibited to the world an illustrious example of Christian piety, digni-

fied by the greatness of it's exertions, and the magnanimity of it's sufferings; and he shewed how the most sublime feelings of devotion are compatible with the diligence of industry, and with the ordinary occupations of life.

The prudent management of Paul was evinced in bringing that heterogeneous mass, which formed the first Christian societies, into a benevolent union. Both the Jew and the Gentile converts were polluted by a thousand diverse superstitions and prejudices; and which must have opposed obstacles to their reciprocal friendship, which nothing but great ability, combined with great moderation, great temper and perseverance, assisted by the divine influence, could have surmounted.

Setting out on his mission to convert the Gentile world—what a dreary and tremendous prospect lay before him! Accumulated dangers pressed on every side.—He had prejudices to vanquish; animosities to soften; he had to elude secret treachery and open force; he had to contend with the machinations of the crafty and with the violence of the powerful.—But from these difficulties he did not shrink, either on account of their variety, their multitude, or their danger. He saw the grave before him; but he beheld the star of Jacob rising beyond it's confines.

Death was to him an object of hope and of exultation; but he did not defy it's terrors, like the ambitious enthusiast, impatient for the parade of martyrdom, or because it promised the fading laurels of posthumous fame, but welcomed it's approach because he knew that it would bring him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

But while I am happy to pay the pious tribute of unfeigned homage to the illustrious Apostle of the Gentiles, I must still adhere to this opinion, which I have entertained almost ever since I have been able to exert the faculty of reflection,—that all the Christianity with which it is necessary for us to be acquainted, is contained, in the Four Gospels and Acts. The same opinion seems to have been held by a great and profound theologian \*. “I have a strong persuasion,” says Lardner, “that the *gospel was plain at first. It is contained in the Four Gospels and Acts, which are plain books.* If Christianity be not plain now, I apprehend it must be our own fault somehow or other.”—The fault appears to me to be this—that we do not sufficiently confine our attention to the Gospels, and particularly to the discourses of Jesus, which comprehend every necessary article of faith or of practice. Instead of endea-

\* Dr. Lardner. See his Works, vol. i. Lxxxviii.

touring to render Christianity plain, too many divines wilfully perplex it with subtleties. They rather labour to puzzle the understanding "*with questions and strifes of words,*" than to inform it with that practical wisdom, "which maketh wise unto salvation."

The discourses of Jesus, which we ought never to lose sight of, when we are discussing any doctrinal or practical points of Christianity, combine the purest morals with calm and sober, but solemn, devotion. They teach love, as the essential principle of piety. They do not found salvation on the shadowy base of a faith in doctrines, which are inscrutable to the wit of man, and equally obscure to the ignorant and the wise.

~ The divine author of Christianity, instead of wrapping holiness in mystery, and evaporating practical goodness in the flames of enthusiasm \*,

\* The pretended Evangelical preachers, who have found a patron and disciple in Mr. Wilberforce, endeavour to lay what they imagine the foundation stone of righteousness, by convincing their followers of their universal, inbred and radical corruption. An implicit assent to this dogma, they inculcate as the rudiments of religion.—Before they cheer their votaries with any glad tidings, they take uncommon pains to convince them that the guilt of Adam has eaten into the very cores of their hearts, that they are sinful creatures, and merit, by the destinies of nature, eternal damnation. When their disciples



turned the attention of his followers to active beneficence; and inculcated that vital morality, which seeks the favour of heaven by increasing the happiness of man.

All the miracles of Jesus, as far as they can be objects of human imitation, are lessons of practical goodness. The power by which they were effected, will be for ever beyond our reach; but we may, without presumption, aspire to catch

have so far abandoned the use of their reason as to be immersed over head and ears in the absurdity of this doctrine, which they take care to set forth in every image of horror which superstition, hypocrisy and folly, reciprocally operating on each other, can suggest; they then teach the submissive novice, to take refuge in "*a saving faith*;" as, in Popish countries, the vilest miscreants are (or rather *were*) often invited to elude the pursuit of justice in the walls of the sanctuary. On the subject of this "*saving faith*," the misnamed Evangelical preachers always labour to sublime the sensations of their hearers to a degree of effervescent transport and enthusiasm, far beyond the temperature of common sense and of moral observance. Raised to a pitch of rapture, they imagine that they have nothing more to do than to grasp the crown of glory, though they have, perhaps, neglected every habit of goodness, and all the benign graces of Christian benevolence, to which it is appended. Thus do these men—the wolves in sheep's cloathing—impose upon the credulity of the illiterate and unthinking part of mankind; and they are often greedily listened to by others, who, *not liking the pains of acquiring moral habits, wish to get to heaven with the least trouble*. They, therefore, enter with alacrity on the cheap and commodious way of "*saving faith*,"

the spirit of beneficence, that prompted their execution. They tell us, in unequivocal language, to sympathise with wretchedness in all its varieties.

If we cannot raise the dead man from the bier, can we not administer consolation to the dying, and smooth their passage to the grave? If we cannot make the lame to walk or the blind to see, still life presents us with sufficient opportunities of doing good. Is there not a widow or an orphan left among us? Are we acquainted with none whose strength is wasting away in sickness? with none, who have felt the rude hand of adversity, and, in whose eyes, the ray of hope has been extinguished by misfortune?

In the chequered sorrows of life, in the melancholy vicissitudes of suffering humanity, how many opportunities has the heart of being kind, and the hand of being bountiful? And yet, how often, in a fit, perhaps, of fullness or disdain, in a moment of cold indifference, or of voluptuous selfishness, do we suffer these opportunities to pass unheeded by us?—But these are opportunities which are more precious than any thing of mere temporal estimation, as they are connected with an immortal interest; and ought to be regarded as the means which Heaven, whose wisdom may be traced in all its apparently mot-

ley and fortuitous dispensations, designs to train up man for a state of eternal blessedness, by habits of love, of gratitude and every tender sympathy.

The majority of the parables of Jesus, of which some are not more remarkable for usefulness of inference, than for genuine beauty of composition, are of a practical tendency. The several parables of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi. of the Pharisee and the Publican, Luke xviii. of the rich man, who laid up a treasure for himself, and was not rich towards God, Luke xii. of the indulgent father and the undutiful son, Luke xv. of the merciful master and the hard-hearted servant, Matt. xviii. of the good Samaritan, Luke x. —all these parables inculcate various branches of piety,—of a piety not enthusiastic, vain and illusory, but fruitful, sober, intelligible and suited to the purposes of common life. They tend to sublime the narrow and selfish feelings; and to widen, around the individual, the horizon of mercy and of charity.

The nature of our redemption, by Jesus, has been a subject of much dispute among Christians. Some have entertained such high notions of it's efficacy, as to suppose that no works which we can do, can at all conduce to our salvation.

This doctrine is pregnant with infinite mischief: and were it universally received, would be fatal to the interests of justice and benevolence. But it is abhorrent both to Scripture\* and to reason.

\* "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice;" (the voice of the son of man;) "and shall come forth;—they that *have done good* unto the resurrection of life, and they that *have done evil* unto the resurrection of damnation." John v. 28, 29.

In St. Matt. xxv. Jesus makes charity the principal ground of acceptance, at the day of Judgment. Knowing the indolent reluctance of many readers to turn to any book that is not before them, and, particularly, when that book happens to be the holy Scriptures, I shall make no apology for transcribing the whole passage to which I allude.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory;—And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set his sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.—Then shall the righteous answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of *the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*—Then shall he say,

There is another opinion, that we are to be made immortal and happy by works only; and without any reference to the conciliatory influence of divine love, manifested in the person, and energetically operating in the atonement of Jesus. The truth, in this case, as in many others, seems to be placed between the extremes of the opposite opinions. It appears to me, that of the eternal life which the Scriptures promise to mankind, the mediatorial sacrifice of Christ is the essential cause, and benevolence the qualifying habit.

Immortal happiness is the free gift of God;

also, unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."——No part of Scripture is more distinct and definite than this is. It admits of no equivocations; it is so clear that he "who runs may read;" and it deserves the serious consideration of those persons, who, trusting to the enthusiastic fumes of imagination, think that there is a safer way to heaven than that of benevolence.



it is not a debt paid to justice nor a tribute to merit. Nor is it a forced gift. We may either accept it or refuse it. If we accept it, we must prove our acceptance an act of rational choice, and, at the same time, of grateful remembrance, by conforming to the conditions to which it is appended.

Eternal happiness is a covenanted mercy. If we will enter life, we must keep the commandments; we must live in obedience to the precepts of the gospel: but still this obedience does not, in the least degree, merit immortality. It is no equivalent, no satisfaction paid to the Almighty for so high a privilege. This still remains the free-will offering of divine mercy, influenced by divine love.

The necessity of obedience does not at all invalidate the excellence of the free gift; it rather increases it, by fitting our natures for its enjoyment. The parent, who leaves his child an inheritance, subject to conditions, of which the performance tends only to increase the enjoyment, is not surely less but more bountiful on that account. The very restrictions he imposes are acts of kindness and proofs of love.—The conditions of the gospel ought to be considered in this light. These conditions may be summed up in one word, but of very extensive significa-

tion,—in Charity. Charity does not merely imply benevolent acts, but benevolent thoughts and affections: in one word, Christian charity denotes a heart filled with that sacred stream of divine love which overflows in love to mankind. This is that qualifying habit, which I mentioned above; and which divine mercy made a condition of future happiness; because it tends to approximate us to the image of God; and because we could not be happy, even in heaven, without it.

Jesus makes a happy immortality, as far as it is an act of a man's own choice, to consist in benevolence\*; though he refers the gift itself, not to our merits, but the mere mercy of God, through the mediatorial sacrifice of the Son, whose "birth was of the womb of the morning;"—"whose goings forth were from of old, from everlasting †."

\* See the passage which I have quoted from St. Matthew, page 136, 137.

† Jesus represents himself as the source of immortality, in the following passages. "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the father but by me. John xiv. 6. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the *life of the world*." In a solemn invocation to his Father, a little before his agony in the garden, Jesus says, "*This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God; and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* John xvii. 3.

If the unbeliever ask me, How, and in what precise manner the sacrifice of Jesus could annul the mortality of the human species, and procure for mankind an admission into mansions of eternal blessedness, I must fairly confess that I cannot explain it. It is enough for us to know, that we cannot be fitted for those mansions, without becoming like unto Jesus, in our benevolent affections. It is enough for us, if we have adequate conceptions and a serious conviction of this truth, without perplexing the mind to unravel mysteries, which can never be comprehended, and *which heaven never designed that man should comprehend.* In a future life, more pages of the book of revealed, as well as natural knowledge, will probably be unfolded to us: at present, there are many inexplicable points in both; on which, while our faculties are thus dim, it behoves us to be silent.

If, knowing our duty here, we perform it to the best of our power, we shall certainly be accepted of God. Whether we square our faith by the precepts of Athanasius, or Arius, or Socinus, we shall enter into life, if we keep the commandments; and follow, as nearly as possible, the steps of Jesus, which point the way to immortality\*. Vainly to attempt to pierce the

\* I feel a firm, unshaken conviction, that it is the vital benevolence of the heart and affections, and not the mere

clouds and darkness that surround the Christian sanctuary may waste our time, but cannot improve our piety. To meditate on things that are above the sphere of our comprehension, and on which, if we lived for a thousand years, we could never form any distinct ideas, only serves to bewilder the understanding, without mending the heart. The religion of Jesus consists more in beneficent actions than in contemplative raptures;—more in the calm and serene sensations of meekness, gentleness and forgiveness than in the wild motions of enthusiasm.

That this is a faithful delineation of the spirit of the religion of Jesus, we may easily learn from an attentive perusal of his various discourses;

assent of the mind to any mystery of doctrine, which constitutes that religion which is most pleasing in the sight of God. There cannot be a more concise and just description of religion than that by St. James i. 2, 7. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the poor and fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

There are, certainly, good and bad men among all sects; and, perhaps, it would be difficult to say, on which side the sum of moral worth preponderates. Hence, ought we not to learn that what opinions we entertain about certain dark and inexplicable matters, are not essential to salvation? And ought they to kindle any animosity between us? Ought we to behold the mote in our brother's eye, and to neglect the beam in our own?—*How long will Christians continue to HATE EACH OTHER?*

and particularly his inimitable sermon on the mount; which is a summary of the whole Christian doctrine; and which exhibits a picture of mild, unostentatious piety, softening the affections, purifying the thoughts, and infusing into the soul the sacred fire of pure, undefiled devotion; and of love human and divine.

In Jesus there was a warm and exalted spirit of devotion. In prayer he seems to have passed the intervals that were left to him from the exercise of charity, and the functions of his public ministry.

The Evangelists frequently tell us of his retiring to a mountain to pray\*. St. Luke vi. 12. tells us—"that Jesus went out to a mountain, where he continued all night in prayer to God." Retiring from the bustle of the world, he sought to give vent to the emotions of piety, in the tranquillity of solitude. He went where he might not be disturbed by the "busy hum of men."

The shades of silence and of solitude are certainly most congenial to those exercises of devotion; from which, man returns into the world with fresh energy to combat it's pollutions, and to resist it's temptations.

\* See Matt. xiv. 13. John vi. 15.



The example, as well as the instructions, of Jesus\* enjoin us, occasionally, to quit the intercourse of society, in order to commune with our own hearts and with him who made us. In this hallowed commerce, the soul, as it were, breathes in a purer atmosphere; where it's organs, refined from their grossness, expand with a more free and spiritual energy.

The spirit of devotion, whose habitual exercise feeds and keeps alive it's own flame, is soon chilled into torpor or weakened into lassitude, by continued and unremitting converse with the gay and busy world.

No man's heart is proof against the seductions of unceasing dissipation. Unless the thoughts are turned by frequent abstraction from temporal and sensual objects, and purified by the fire of the altar, they soon degenerate into filth and corruption. An occasional sequestration from the

\* " And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed " Mark i. 35.

" When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." &c. Matt. vi. 5, 6.

world is necessary to liberate us from the force of it's enchantments.

The heart of man is naturally disposed to what is good \*; virtue and beneficence seem most congenial to it; they please without any factitious charms; but as it is, on all sides, accessible to temptations, corruption soon finds a way into it. —To guard against corruption, it becomes necessary to cultivate the spirit of devotion; which, when it has become habitual, when God our father, and Jesus, his messenger of immortality, are the objects of our warmest affections and our often contemplations, the fascination of perishable pleasures is broken, and reason rises superior to the tyranny of the senses.

From the shrine of devotion, we gather

\* I am not ignorant, that many are of opinion, that the heart of man is *naturally more* disposed to evil than to good.— But moral evil appears as repugnant to his natural sentiments, as pain or physical evil is to his natural feelings.

Moral and physical good have a more intimate connexion than is generally supposed. It is not improbable, that man is born with a moral, as well as a physical taste; but both are liable to be vitiated by improper management, and perverse associations. Thus the moral taste comes to relish cruelty and injustice; as the physical taste, by the same sort of aberration from it's natural and healthy state, is brought to find a gratification in alcohol and tobacco, and a thousand nauseous and unwholesome drinks and viands.

strength to advance in holiness. If our affections are soured by the injuries of enemies or the treachery of friends, prayer is a sovereign balm to assuage the fretful acrimony of the heart. In the holy effusions of prayer, the spirit of animosity is exhaled into a diviner element; and we imbibe courage to imitate Jesus in doing good; careless whether the good we do, meet with imprecations or with praises.

Our prayers to God ought to be associated with fervor and with seriousness. When we are on the knees of devotion, we should steadily keep our thoughts fixed on the Divine Presence; and should never forget, that God knows all we think, as well as all we say. To be guilty of levity, in any work of moment, shews littleness of mind;—but to suffer any levity to debase our worship of the Almighty, is to mingle folly with impiety.

In his acts of religious adoration, Jesus seems, as far as we can collect from the short notices of the Evangelists, to have been, in a most peculiar manner, distinguished by earnestness and solemnity. The characteristic fervency of his devotional exercises may be seen by consulting John xvii. which contains a sublime, a feeling and impressive intercession to his heavenly father for his disciples and followers; and which well

describes the awful and dignified seriousness of his devotion.

Before his apprehension, Jesus retired to prepare for the last hour of his stay among mortals, in the shades of the garden of Gethsemane. What warmth, what sincerity, what energy of piety is marked in his prayer, at that distressing moment ! “ Father ! if thou be willing, remove this cup from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done ! ” This prayer does not lose it's emphasis by it's conciseness. Genuine anguish is never diffusive. It is more given to taciturnity or abruptness than to prolixity. This prayer of Jesus will suit every Christian, who, languishing in sorrow, lifts up his head to heaven, for that comfort which nothing in the world can bestow.

Devotion is that fountain, from which misery may fetch the purest streams of consolation. The Evangelist tells us, that the prayer of Jesus brought an angel from heaven, to minister comfort unto him. This seems to intimate the power of devotion ;—of devotion warm, genuine and sincere. Angels of consolation, though invisible to our perceptions, are probably ever attendant on the righteous ; and whisper the spirit of peace, in the inquietude of grief.

The earnestness with which Jesus prayed increased with his increasing despondency. The Evangelist, without any embellishment of rhetoric, tells us, that " he prayed more earnestly ;" and he has delineated the exquisite peculiarity of his agonies, by saying, that " his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground."

There is a principle of satiety attached to all earthly objects; the heart soon grows tired of them. It seeks for something imperishable on which to fix. The very organization of man, renders him incapable of unmixed and continued satisfaction in what is sensual and transitory.

The soul will, at times, languish with weariness, in the midst of every human enjoyment. The palled sense and the sick heart seek where to find rest; but they find none here; where they behold every thing in a state of uncertainty, of change and decay. They therefore turn for solace to him who is immutable. The power that made all things becomes the subject of our adoration, the theme of our wonder, our gratitude and our praise.

But we must take care that we do not substitute prayer, which ought to be considered only



as an incentive to, for the practice of religious duties. Devotion ought in us, as in Jesus, to be resorted to, not to supplant, but to fill up the interstices of practical piety.

That alone is devotion, true and undefiled, which disposes the heart to the production of human happiness; or makes it sympathise more tenderly with human misery. For this purpose, prayer will first quench in us, all ill-will and animosity towards all men; for, devotion can be no better than idle mummery, if it be not associated with the spirit of mildness and forgiveness.

Before the heart can glow with that genuine love of God which prayer supposes, and of which it breathes the fragrant incense, every spark of malevolence towards our fellow-creatures must be extinguished. Without this, prayer, instead of being an offering sweet and grateful to heaven, is only a fetid vapour, exhaled from corruption.

Prayer extinguishes hate, in order to kindle love; and the love, that is thus kindled, will not be narrow and partial, limited by exceptions, or debased by any alloy of bitterness, but, like the source from which it flows, and which is the aspiration of the Spirit of God upon the soul,

in it's abstraction from all low and perishable pursuits, it will embrace the expanse of universal nature.

Prayer, while it warms and invigorates all the sympathies which interest us in the happiness of our family or our friends, at the same time, inspires in the breast the flame of universal benevolence. The human race, that are spread over the whole globe, are the object of Christian prayer.—The nearer approaches which the soul makes to it's great and glorious original, the more it inhales the spirit of a diffusive tenderness. It ceases to feel any little vulgar animosities. The flame of divine love, excited in the human breast by the genuine fervor of prayer, exalts and refines all the affections, and makes every nerve of man thrill with the mild and delicious raptures of universal benevolence.

So strenuously does Christianity insist on that piety which is uncontaminated by hypocrisy, that it makes even the government of the thoughts a point of religious duty. On this occasion, it was well said by Boerhaave, as the judicious Paley has before remarked, "That our Saviour knew mankind better than Socrates." Impure ideas administer poison to virtue ; and food to depravity. They taint the modesty of youth ; and they heat the sensuality of age. They injure those decencies

which are essential to purity of manners; and that delicacy which is the charm of mixed society. Licentious ideas and licentious discourse, habitually indulged, dissolve those combinations of chaste and serious thought which are the defence of virtue; and inevitably lead to a fatal and incurable corruption. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of my mouth," was the injunction of divine wisdom; and the integrity of the moral principle depends greatly on its observance\*.

But let it not be supposed, that Christianity is

\* Count Rumford, vol. i. 35. says, "So great is the effect of cleanliness upon man, that it extends even to his moral habits. Virtue never dwelt long with filth and nastiness; nor do I believe that there ever was a person, scrupulously attentive to cleanliness, who was a consummate villain."

If outward filth and nastiness of body have such an influence on the moral principle, surely a stronger influence must be exerted by filth and nastiness of thought and speech. There is a constant action and reaction between words and ideas. Thus corruption operates with a double force. It is revolting, to observe, in the conversation of the dissolute, the number of harmless and often sacred expressions, which they associate with indecency, and which are no sooner uttered than they kindle the sensual fire. If the young wish to guard against depravity, or the old to stop its progress, they cannot too scrupulously shun impurity of thought and speech. It may be laid down as a maxim, justified by general experience, —That there is no person, who is habitually foul-mouthed, whose esteem is worth seeking, or whose honesty can be relied on.

an enemy to the pleasures of innocence, to cheerfulness of converse, and the sparkling gaieties of fancy. The religion of Jesus does not, as men of gloomy minds have too often imagined, direct us to be constantly depressed with despondency, meditating on eternity, or musing over the grave. Are all the energies of man, who is said to have been created in the image of God, to be damped by incessant reflection on his latter end? Are languor of soul and uneasiness of conscience, dejection of spirit and gloominess of ideas, the essential characteristics of Christian piety? Can we not be saved, unless we are continually darkening the imagination with the sufferings of the cross? Did Jesus direct that piety which borders on misanthropy; which, in the delusive dreams of enthusiasm, bestows the tribute of salvation rather on the fervour of the lips, than of the heart; on the austerity of the devotions, more than on the benevolence of the conduct? Did not Jesus himself sanction both by precept and example that piety which mingles with the world, without mingling in its corruptions, or partaking in its crimes; which neglects not the various duties of public and domestic life; and which is the kind promoter of social happiness in all its varieties? Did Jesus reprobate those inoffensive gaieties of heart, which form a part, and no inconsiderable part, of the captivations of life? Did he represent the Christian temper of a gloomy as-

pect, covering the face of it's votaries with tears and mourning? Is he not himself constantly described in Scripture by the image of a lamb?—an image of cheerfulness, which we ought not to diffociate from our ideas of religion. Is not the kind notice which he took of little children, of whom the characteristic feature is gay and harmless mirth; and his declaration, that of such is the kingdom of God, a sufficient testimony, that he wished rather to increase than to diminish the pleasurable sensations of life; and that the disposition and the manners of a Christian should not be shrouded by the forbidding gloom, the sullen spirit, and the weeping countenance of an enthusiast or a sectary? Is not the first miracle that he wrought, at a marriage, in Cana of Galilee, a declaration that he did not come to banish cheerfulness from the earth; and that the profession of his religion was by no means incompatible with social enjoyment?—Those who sketch the figure of Christianity with a desponding look, and a dejected posture, must be strangers to it's genuine spirit, shedding joy upon the heart, and banishing sadness and asperity from the brow.

At the close of the eighteenth century, let us not rake from it's ashes the spirit of Calvin, scowling with the moroseness of fanaticism;—for ever lowering over the infernal abyss, and scattering fire and brimstone in the paths of harmless plea-



santry.—Let us not conjure up this spirit from it's repose, in order to eclipse the spirit of Jesus, bright, serene, unclouded, benign and cheerful; indulgent to human frailty; comforting the weary and the heavy-laden;—friendly to innocent pleasure, and adverse to that senseless apathy and that haggard superstition, which would strip vivacity of it's playfulness and sprightliness of it's smile.

The general complexion of human life is sufficiently melancholy, without any artificial expedients to cover it with more dismal hues. It is a more necessary and more sacred duty to seek for balm, with which to sooth the afflicted, than for sorrows, with which to depress the happy. If we plant the cypress and other emblems of grief among the habitations of the dead, there is no reason why we should not permit the voice of gladness to be heard in the chambers of the living.

There are some recreations which the Puritans of the last century considered as flagrant sins. Among these, the amusements of the drama were more particularly the objects of their invective.

Mr. Wilberforce, whose work is shaded with the sombre tints of Puritanism, seems to consider

the theatres as inauspicious to piety; and as places to which a Christian ought not to resort.

If Mr. Wilberforce do not choose to be present at a play, because the play-houses are frequented by debauchees, he might, on the same ground of argument, abstain from the senate or the sanctuary. Corruption and depravity are to be met with in every walk of life; and under almost every modification of social intercourse; and if we will go where they are not, we must go out of the world at once. I know no other alternative.—But does not Mr. Wilberforce recollect, that the divine author of Christianity eat, without scruple, *at the same table*, with publicans and sinners? Does he not know that virtue is proved by resisting temptation; and that he discovers the brightest integrity who is chaste amid seduction, and incorrupt amid corruption?

The corruptions, of which Mr. Wilberforce complains, are accidental not essential to the theatre; and it is probable that they would exist, with more criminal aggravations, if there were not a theatre in London.—Vice and licentiousness, ingenious in expedients, would soon find other haunts; and which would only be more dangerous if they were more enveloped in the shades of mystery, and less exposed to that influence of public opinion, of which notwithstanding

ing it's partial eccentricities, the general result is always favourable to the interests of virtue, of delicacy and of chastity.

The motive which prompts the amusements of mankind, is agreeable sensation ; which admits of two divisions, into physical and moral. The former is suited more to mere animal, the last to rational beings. It cannot be doubted to which class the pleasures of the theatre belong ; they are certainly more attached to intellect than to sensuality ; and have rather a moral than a physical taste.

The stage, even in it's present degenerate state, when it abandons the sublime efforts of tragedy, which instructs by painting the influence of the passions on the human character and on human happiness, for the wit, the vivacity and the playfulness of comedy, for the drollery of farce, or for the magnificence of dress and scenery, for the pomp of processions and all the ingenious versatility of art,—must still be considered as providing an harmless repast ;—and one, indeed, of no inconsiderable utility, as it prevents the spectator from recurring to more sensual and pernicious entertainments, to the excesses of the tavern, the discontent and acrimony of the card-table, and the more ruinous criminality of the gaming-house.

It cannot be denied, but that it has been long the fashion, and which has lately grown to a rank excess, to contaminate the language of the drama, with a mixture of ribaldry and obscenity; and a profusion of all the contemptible equivocations of indecency. For these, no excuse can be pleaded; they tend directly to corrupt the heart, and to vitiate the moral sentiments. They profane the sacredness of modesty; and they wither that nice sensibility to the blush of shame, which, when on particular occasions it shews it's delicate tints on the cheek of youth and beauty, is inexpressibly captivating.

The morals of mankind seem reciprocally to influence and to be influenced by their amusements. One gives a colour to the other. This is perhaps the reason why, in London, which is a vast focus of sensuality, so many of our modern productions are so lavishly tinged with indecency. Depraved morals seek, with curious solicitude, the depraved seasoning of an obscene and wanton phraseology; and which, in it's turn, aggravates the depravity from which it springs.

The only substantial remedy for the corruptions of the theatre, is an amelioration of morals; and which would by no means be promoted by the suppression of all theatrical diversions. This effect is only to be hoped for, from a more gene-

ral and virtuous system of education; and the exhibition of a *purser example* by the great;—the corruption of whose sentiments, the prodigality of whose vices, and the pollution of whose taste descend to those beneath them. At present, the upper ranks are the patrons and the originals of the great mass of folly, indecency and depravity, which are seen not only on the mimic stage, but also on the stage of real life.

But, notwithstanding all the corruptions of the theatre, I am inclined to believe, that when all the means, whether direct or indirect, by which they foster the growth of vice have been computed, a great balance will remain in favour of their general tendency to promote the interests of virtue.

The sympathetic principle, which presides in the breast of the spectator, seems to be always most powerfully excited when virtue is seen to triumph over vice; and when benevolence, full of life and energy, is delineated scattering joy and happiness over the whole extent of it's horizon.—Then, even corruption, for a moment, soaring from it's baseness, pays it's homage to virtue;—then the applauses of the audience are most redoubled and most sincere.

Mr. Wilberforce makes religion to consist in



the exercise of the affections ; or, in what, according to his description of the matter, and notwithstanding all his palliations, must be understood to mean—an inflamed state of the devotional feelings. Thus he, indirectly, encourages enthusiasm and hypocrisy ; for, by artificial contrivances, the affections may be raised to almost any pitch ; and the greatest sinners have sometimes been absorbed in what might thus be called—pious ecstasies. The effervescence of devotional feelings has indeed often been the characteristic of the most worthless of mankind.

Mr. Wilberforce would have acted more wisely, if he had made religion to consist, as Jesus Christ evidently did, in those benevolent sympathies which invariably lead to benevolent actions. Here there is no room for hypocrisy or delusion. Religion is appreciated by a rule of which we cannot mistake the application.

When Jesus was asked, which was the great commandment in the law, he answered, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matt. xxii.

In Mark xii. he declared, There is none other commandment greater than these.

Hence we learn, that the love of God, to be pure and holy, must be identified with the love of mankind. In other words—divine love, is social love impelling to pure beneficence. His bosom, therefore, possesses the genuine principle of divine love; the elementary flame of immortal happiness, whose actions and affections are consonant to this grand and fundamental law of all religion and all morality; “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;” or, as the same precept has been expressed by Jesus, in other words, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them.” Matt. vii. 12.

Thus we see that the Christian system blends religion and morality in an indissoluble union. The neglect of one is the neglect of both. To disjoin devotion and morals, or morals and devotion, is to renounce the gospel.

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;” is, as we have seen, that command which the founder of Christianity represented, as comprehending the sum of it's duties. The purest adoration, therefore, which we can pay to God, is to promote the happiness of our brethren. Where divine love is made the motive to social, the nar-

row and selfish vanish in the expanded stream of benevolent sensations. Christian love, glowing warm and genuine in the heart, consumes the force of the selfish principle; as the rod of Aaron swallowed up the rods of the magicians. Exod. vii. 12.

There is in man both a selfish and a social principle,—a principle which attaches him to self-interest, and another which binds him to the interests of his kind. The first is encouraged by solitude; which soon compresses the affections into one point, and reconciles the heart to that, of which the social principle inspires the aversion;—the taste of undivided, unshared and isolated enjoyment.

It is the social principle, which, by an invisible but powerful magic, touching all the chords of sympathy, tends to make man weary and comfortless when alone. It attracts him, by an irresistible charm, into an intercourse with his kind, and insinuates an attractive fondness for the endearments of friendship.

Man is placed, in life, in such circumstances and amid such relations as tend to invigorate and expand the social and sympathetic, and to stifle and counteract the selfish principle. The kindred affections, the spirit of family-love, of love

parental, filial, fraternal tends to cherish, and unfold, at a very early period, the embryon beauties of benevolent sensation. Even from the breast of our mother we seem to imbibe those benign influences of sympathy which abate the relish for solitary enjoyment, and teach us that we increase our own happiness when we share it with others.

As we grow up, the connexions of friendship and of love (particularly the latter), promote still farther the growth of the social principle. Love teaches us that we are most happy by a reciprocation of happiness.

Friendship multiplies the tender links of sympathy; and relaxes the power of selfishness; by associating a multitude of divided interests and sensations with our own.

In Paradise, it was not good for man to be alone; and certainly in that state of complicated misery to which we are born, and in which we have to live, it cannot be good for us to be alone. The fading spirits require the refreshing intercourse of society.

Short intervals of absence from the peopled world, are, indeed, auspicious to virtue; but continued and habitual solitude chills the bosom

against the warm impulses of benevolence, and freezes the best blood, that the sympathetic affections would circulate through the heart.

The relations in which nature has placed us, and the affections of family, of love and friendship which are the source of so much happiness, and which indeed are the purest sources of human happiness, all tend to elicit and mature the sympathetic principle; which connects the interest of the individual with the interest of his fellow-creatures. By rendering benevolence the source of our most agreeable sensations, they impel to it's exercise, by the most powerful incitement.

Yet, so strongly is the benevolent counteracted by the domineering, selfish principle, that, notwithstanding all the natural and associated causes, which give a bias to benevolence, selfishness too often prevails over sympathy. The love of solitary and exclusive absorbs, instead of being absorbed by, the love of communicated bliss. The individual consults his own happiness, coldly negligent of that of his kindred and his kind. A base and ignominious self-interest becomes the tyrant of the soul, and smothers every spark of benevolent sensation.

But the Christian religion, originating from divine wisdom, and favouring those relations of



nature and those attractions of sympathy, which it had before ordained, lends it's awful sanctions to extinguish the selfish and to inspire the social flame.

The messenger of immortality has threatened the selfish with this awful sentence: "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;" while those tender-hearted persons, who, feeling the divine glow of love unfeigned, labour, like ministering angels, to sooth the diversified miseries of human life, shall be called "the blessed of God;" and, when all the grandeur of the world is crumbled into dust, shall shine like the stars for ever and ever.

Thus we see that the whole sum and substance of religion, consists not in the effervescing sensations of devotional zeal, but in the exercise of those benevolent sympathies which endear men to God, while they endear them to each other. Let us constantly try the Christianity of Christians by this test, and we shall never be deceived.

But, if we make religion to consist in those tumultuous emotions of the soul, which have no relation to beneficence, or in a bare assent to those doctrines which have no influence on human conduct, we are only opening a door, by which enthusiasm and imposture may enter into the sanctuary of the righteous, and usurp the

honours which belong to sincere and unaffected piety.

But though I am an enemy to enthusiastic zeal, and fanatic turbulence, yet, let it not be supposed, that I would, by any means, discourage that degree of devout sensation, which is the never-failing associate of true holiness; which is mingled with beneficence, and is restrained from the ebullitions of intemperance.

In the breast of the righteous, there is a pure and perennial spring of consolatory sensation, whose waters are never turbid; which, in affliction, are a cordial to the faint spirits; and which, in the torturing hour of misfortune and despondency, cheer the aching breast, with those calm and delicious instillations of love and hope which are a foretaste of immortality.

As far as all the varied emotions of the heart, of which some branch from physical sensibility, others from early association, can be preserved separate from the indistinct fervours of enthusiasm, and be made subservient to the energies of practical goodness, they ought to be encouraged.

Of all the affections, of a religious cast, which can enter into the soul of man, gratitude is one which ought to be cultivated with most care,

and cherished with most fondness.—Gratitude, which may be denominated, one of the handmaids of practical piety, means such a devout and serious sense of the goodness of God, as naturally softens and expands the heart towards his creatures.

When the grateful man receives any distinguished favour or kindness from one of his fellow-men, his heart instantly vibrates towards him with a degree of partial fondness. He feels a warm interest in his benefactor's welfare; he is ready to rejoice over his good fortune, or to mourn over his bad;—and these kind emotions are gradually extended towards his family and his connexions. His gratitude causes him, in some measure, to identify his own feelings with those of his benefactor; he grows attached to his friendships, he catches the complexion of his sympathies.

Gratitude to God, where felt in it's genuine purity, will be analogous in it's operations, with gratitude to man; but, in the former, the sensations of love will be heightened by those of adoration. The grateful heart, in it's moments of abstraction from earthly to heavenly objects, thrilling with pure and simple, not riotous and turbid, ecstasies, will be warmly and affectionately disposed towards the whole family of mankind.

All those tender and sympathetic obligations which we now include in the name of Gratitude, seem, in scriptural language, to be comprehended in the name of Love ; and I have before observed, that love to God, is the sum of Christian duty ; and comprehends every branch of practical beneficence.

The Apostle John, who was himself a pattern of the meekness of love, in his first epistle, which breathes the spirit of his master, constantly considers love, or gratitude, or whatever affection or species of adoration it be, which divine love embraces, as analogous to practical beneficence.

Our Saviour himself frequently inculcated the same doctrine. In John xiv. 15. he says, " If ye love me, keep my commandments : " again, " He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. " These expressions imply an inviolate union between devotion and practical piety—the piety of the affections and the conduct ; as will plainly appear when we come to consider what is the substance of those commandments of Jesus ; of which, he considers the observance as a full and satisfactory expression of our love to him, or to him that sent him \*.

\* " He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who sent him,"

In John xv. 12. Jesus says, with great emphasis, "This is my commandment; that ye love one another, as I have loved you." In John xiii. 34, 35. Jesus had enforced this precept, if possible, with more energy; "A *new commandment* I give unto you—that ye love one another; as I also have loved you, that ye love one another. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*"

Here it is remarkable, that the duty of that mutual love, which St. Paul calls charity, is said to be "a *new commandment.*"—Now, it was not new as to the expression; for the same commandment is found in the law. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Levit. xix. 18.—But, under the Old Testament-dispensation, this rule of life was buried under a mass of ceremonies; and was not made the prominent and distinguishing feature of the Mosaic system.—On the other hand, Jesus insisted on it as the essential characteristic of his disciples; as the test, the password of his religion. He made it a sacred rule of conscience, a vital principle of action; from which all the Christian virtues ought to flow in copious streams; and to dispense happiness, in whatever channel they are rolled.

Well, therefore, might Jesus call this "a *new commandment;*" when he enforced it with new



energy, consecrated it with new functions, and made the spirit of love as essential to the vitality of the Christian system, as the spirit of animation is to the animal functions.

“By this,” said the son of man (and let his words sink deep into the heart of every Christian), “shall all men know that ye are my disciples, *if ye have love ONE TO ANOTHER.*”—My God! if mutual love be the essential and characteristic distinction of the true followers of Jesus, how long has it been unknown, or how much has it been despised!

The annals of ecclesiastical history, dropping blood and breathing animosity in almost every page, teach us that Christians have been usually more distinguished by their bitterness and asperity, than by their love and forbearance towards each other; and that they have sometimes disgraced the benign religion of their master, by the perpetration of cruelties, at which reason blushes, and benevolence turns pale.

How often has bigotry, whose blood rages with the lust of cruelty, presumed that Christ would be gratified by tying heresy to the stake, or putting it to the sword? Has not the least difference in the merest minutiae of opinion, in matters of total indifference, or in questions about inscrutable

mysteries and inexplicable doctrines, frequently excited the most furious contentions in the Christian world?—contentions which could only be appeased by the slaughter of those among whom they were agitated, and who ought to have been endeared to each other by a reciprocal affection,

It has, alas! but too long been forgotten by those, who have professed the warmest zeal for the religion of Jesus, that *brotherly love ought to be a common bond of harmony and friendship, among all sects and denominations of Christians*. The various shades and complexions of faith, that are found among Christians, ought no more to affect their mutual good-will and kindness, than the earth is affected by the tints or shapes of the ever-changing clouds that sprinkle the horizon.

Whatever may be our differences of opinion about modes of faith, or mysteries of doctrine, we are all equally dear to our common master, Christ; if we fulfil his royal law, and *have love to one another*. By this test, thou hast promised, O blessed Jesus! to own us for thy disciples,—*if we have love one to another*.

Love is the hallowed flame which should be exhaled to heaven, pure as the purest incense from the hearts of Christians. Like the vestal

fire, it ought never for a moment to be extinguished. While love prevails, the spirit of Jesus sways the heart; but as soon as it vanishes in the gusts of hate, or the rage of intolerance, the life, the soul, the beauty of Christianity is no more!—The name of Christian may still be usurped, the mummary of devotion may still be performed with affected solicitude, but the moment that the æthereal fire of Christian love leaves the bosom, that moment every spark of *VITAL Christianity* expires. The fiends of darkness crowd into the heart which the spirit of Jesus has forsaken; and the pretended Christian ceases to have any more likeness to Christ, than the tyger, prowling in the desert, *has to the infant, smiling at the breast.*

A PICTURE OF  
**CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.**

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*The Crucifixion, with critical and practical reflections.*

ALL the circumstances of the crucifixion, as they are recorded by the four Evangelists, are highly interesting. They place the character of Jesus, in a light truly dignified and amiable; they recommend him in the most forcible and captivating manner to our love and our veneration; and they, at the same time, suggest many hints for our improvement in practical piety. Let us then endeavour to follow our blessed Saviour from the beginning to the end of his agonies.

After the celebration of the passover and the institution of the sacrament, Jesus retired to wait

the arrival of the traitor in the garden of Gethsemane;—a favourite spot, which, while at Jerusalem, he was wont to frequent for the purposes of religious meditation. Hither, he used to withdraw from the bustle of the city and from the clamorous reproaches of his enemies, to a scene of shade and silence; and hither he came at this awful period, to pass the last hours of his mortal humiliation in the pleasurable and tranquillizing effusions of devotion.

At the approach of death, we can hardly help feeling some dread and depressing sensations.—To vanish for ever from this world, to lose sight of all, that was ever dear to us, and to migrate we know not whither, but into a state totally different from that, to which we have been accustomed,—these things conspire to agitate the heart in it's last moments with many distressing inquietudes.—Jesus, who, in his mortal capacity, was in all respects like unto us (sin only excepted), seems to have experienced some sensations allied to that anxiety, which mortals feel, when they tremble on the verge of their dissolution. His soul grew exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. (Matt. xxvi. 38.)

There are some persons, particularly those whom the laws of their country doom to perish on a scaffold, who affect a contempt of death.



They perhaps make a display of ostentatious intrepidity; and shew that they retain to their latest breath an idle fondness for worldly admiration. They die rather as braggarts than as Christians, whose courage is tempered by piety and made amiable by sensibility.—In his last sufferings, Jesus was firm; but his firmness was not carried to apathy. He did not attempt, with the vain gestures of artificial heroism, to conceal his distress or to veil his dejection. Oppressed with the heaviness of care, he ingenuously confessed to his disciples that “his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.”

Pierced with anguish, the man Jesus sought solace in devotion; and his example proves that religious exercises are the best preparative for death. “He fell on his face, and prayed; saying, O my father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”—The tumult of agony which oppressed him, is very observable in his manner. “*He fell on his face, &c.*”—“If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” He manifests a feeling consciousness of the misery which he was about to undergo; but his reluctance to endure pain, (and what man is there who has not the same reluctance?) subsides in religious resignation. “Not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

In all things we may take example from Jesus; and the more we approach to his likeness, the greater will be our degree of present happiness and of future glory. In nothing shall we consult our own happiness more than by imitating him in his resignation. Hence we shall be able to extract joy out of sorrow, and to learn patience in all the casualties of life.—The visitations of affliction are made much more bitter than they otherwise would be by the turbulence of our discontent. In every little circumstance, which occasionally reverses our wishes and blights our hopes, we are but too prone to arraign the wisdom and to decry the goodness of the supreme disposer. We do not consider God, as Christians at least, ought to consider him,—as an indulgent father, provident of our good and studious of our happiness, in all his dispensations. Instead of saying with Jesus, “not my will, but thine be done;” we set up our petulant desires in opposition to his beneficent decrees. If God send us sickness or adversity, or any of the many calamities with which the cup of life often runs over, we too seldom reflect that in the great plan of Providence, these things are intended to aid the progress of our improvement or to hasten the beginnings of our repentance.—In the hour of anguish, there is no impiety in supplicating heaven to abate our miseries. In sickness it is natural to implore health; in adversity better

fortune.—We may say with Jesus, “let this cup pass from me;” but let us with cheerful confidence leave it to him, who careth for us, to do what is best for our present, and most conducive to our future welfare.

When Jesus had finished his prayer, “there appeared an angel unto him, strengthening him.”—It is probable that there are in this world various ministering Spirits, whom God employs as *the instruments of his providence*;—Spirits, whose celestial aspirations cheer the righteous in their dejection, and inspire hope when it is ready to vanish away.

It must have been a great aggravation of the sufferings of Jesus to have been betrayed by one of his disciples;—one who had shared his confidence, and been the companion of his labours.—Every act of treachery excites most poignant anguish. We are so constituted, that all injuries excite sensations of aversion; but that aversion is inflamed into abhorrence, when we are wounded by the sting of perfidious friendship; when those who ought to have cherished our interest abandon it, those who ought never to have regarded us but with affection, or to have served us but with fidelity, seek to promote their own mercenary ends by betraying us!!!—Yet alas! such acts of atrocity are no ideal suppositions.

The canvas of life is made dark and dismal by their frequent recurrence ; and the sad experience too often chills the benevolence of the bosom and cramps the free expansion of the soul.—But, if Jesus, who could read the heart and sift the thoughts, could not select twelve friends without one proving a traitor, can we wonder that, of the few friends, which fall to our lot, the majority should seek our confidence only to abuse it, and steal like the gliding serpent into the secrets of our bosom, only the more securely to effect our destruction.

With what painful sensations must Jesus have been depressed, when the covetous thief, who had sold his friend, his instructor, and his saviour for a bribe, came to crown the foulest treachery with the grossest simulation, with his hollow “ hail, master,” his perfidious embrace, and his envenomed kiss. How resplendent does the meek forbearance of “ the man of sorrows ” appear on this trying occasion ! What man among us, who had experienced such treachery, could have refrained from venting the bitter exclamations of infuriated indignation ?—Not so the benign and gentle Jesus ;—he gave way to no expressions of passion or emotions of rage.—With an impressive solemnity, “ friend,” said he, to Judas, “ wherefore art thou come ? ” No intemperance of language could have awed and embarrassed the

traitor so much as this mild question. By recalling to his mind the memory of past confidence and affection, it placed before his eyes in all it's loathsome deformity the baseness of his present perfidy.

So formidable did Jesus appear to the Jewish government, that they had sent an armed host to apprehend him. Aware of the extensive influence which his preaching and his miracles had obtained over the people, (John xi. 47, 48) they feared lest his apprehension should excite an insurrection. They trembled at the authority of a poor, insulted, and friendless peasant of a despised province, who had not where to lay his head.—Surely this is strange and unaccountable, unless we allow that Jesus was what he pretended to be, and what the Evangelists describe him to have been,—a messenger sent from heaven and invested with powers more than human! But, he, who could have commanded legions of angels, or have called down fire from heaven to consume his relentless persecutors, suffered himself to be led *like a lamb to the slaughter*.

How transient is the fervor of piety, and how great the wayward instability of human resolution! Jesus was no sooner delivered into the power of his adversaries than “*all his disciples forsook him and fled.*” Of twelve Apostles one,



with unparalleled impiety, betrayed him for a bribe; the rest pusillanimously abandoned him in his adversity. What a just representation is this of human life, in which those in prosperity are greeted with the tenderest salutations, with the showy semblance of the most ardent affection and the most disinterested friendship, but who are left to perish, deserted, unheeded, and alone in their misfortunes!—I cannot here help remarking how much the testimony of the Apostles is confirmed by this unsolicited and artless confession of their ingratitude and apostasy. Unlike the deceitful authors of imposture, who are ever eager to seize or to invent opportunities to blazon their own reputation, or to hide their falsehood under specious pretensions of veracity, the Apostles, instead of fabricating eulogies on their virtues, have acknowledged their cowardice, and recorded their disgrace. They were more anxious not to conceal the truth than to obtain a perishable renown. Indeed, I most sincerely believe that there is not a single book extant in the world, which contains such strong *internal evidence* of veracity, or so many characteristic traits of an ingenuous, undefining honesty, as are to be found in the memoirs of the Evangelists. The New Testament is its own proof; and though Christianity be supported by a great mass of external testimony, yet, if every particle of that testimony had perished, if not even a single page

of the ancient fathers had been transmitted to us, if the whole aggregate of Christian and heathen authors, whose writings in any way corroborate the truth of the Gospel-history or the genuineness of the sacred writings, had been lost in the wreck of time, I am of opinion that the memoirs of the life and doctrine of Christ, as written by the Evangelists, would of themselves have afforded a satisfactory and highly credible proof of the truth of revelation.—If the internal evidence be so convincing, and if moreover that evidence be, as it fortunately is, illustrated and strengthened by a copious variety of external proof, how shall we escape *if we wilfully neglect so great salvation?* When I see so many of my fellow-creatures not only speculative unbelievers in Christianity, but scoffers at it's usefulness, and active and strenuous enemies to it's propagation, I can hardly think of their perverseness without dismay, or of their blindness without tears.

Let us return from this digression to attend Jesus to the palace of the High Priest; who first “asked him of his disciples and his doctrine.” (John xviii. 19.) With authoritative energy he replies, “I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and, *in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me; what I have said unto them;*

*behold they know what I said."* This answer, which shows the intrepidity of innocence, and which is *strikingly descriptive of the characteristic manner* of Jesus, probably made a deep impression on him, to whom it was addressed; but it was not the impression of conviction but resentment. The simple voice of truth is seldom agreeable to those, who are invested with power; and, particularly, when it is addressed to them by inferiors, or by those, whom they expect to find supplicants. Habituated to an obsequious adulation, they are, if I may so express it, fondled into insolence.

The sycophants of the great are continually watching even the changes of their countenance, and endeavouring to obtain favour by accommodating their behaviour to every tint of sensation which they descry on that varying mirror. The officers of the High Priest had no sooner observed the gleam of displeasure kindling in his eyes, than one of them which stood by "struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, *Answerest thou the High Priest so?*" "If I have spoken evil," said Jesus with his usual serenity, "bear witness of the evil; but, if well, why smitest thou me?" (John xviii. 23.) To know the effect that was produced by the sayings of Jesus, though not noticed by the Evangelists, we must never forget that his manner was peculiarly impressive.—Whatever he spake, was uttered with authority;

and yet was often so softened by mildness, that, while it called forth reverence, it could hardly fail of conciliating affection.—“ *If well, why smitest thou me?*” His heart must have been hard indeed, who could have heard this interrogatory without emotion.

The Jewish rulers and priesthood, conscious of the depraved and depraving laxity of their morals and the insincerity of their devotion, determined to deliver themselves from the remonstrances of one, whom they knew to be so intimately acquainted and so justly incensed with their hypocrisy. With affected disdain but exasperated jealousy, they saw the inglorious son of a carpenter, without wealth or connexions, or any attractions of external distinction, set up for a teacher of the people. With implacable aversion they heard him place the practice of charity above the observances of ceremony, thus destroying the boasted merit of their factitious piety and eclipsing the splendour of their lucrative imposture. And their animosity, which was sharpened by envy, was aggravated by fear, when his miracles were becoming the theme of national astonishment. Self love now increased the bitterness of malice; and stimulated the activity of revenge.

The great council of the Jews had assembled



in the High Priest's palace, determined on the murder, but anxious, if possible, to perpetrate it under the mask of legal forms. When tyranny outrages the spirit, it likes not to abandon the semblance of justice. Studious to disguise the atrocity of their proceedings, the Jewish government sedulously sought for false witnesses. Promises and intimidation were probably employed, but as it seems without effect; for, though many false witnesses appeared, they miscarried through the inconsistency of their testimony. (Mark xiv. 55, 59.) Consistency in falsehood is rarely to be met with; while the wise arrangements of Providence have made truth invincible. Religious truth may for a season be overwhelmed in the errors of prejudice or the storms of persecution, but its glory will at last rise from the pressure of accumulated obstructions; and the brightness of its glory will be increased in proportion to the period of its obscuration.

To the false accusations which were brought against him, Jesus answered nothing; but his look was eloquent and his silence impressive. Astonished at his behaviour, the High Priest "arose and said, *Answerest thou nothing?* what is it which these witness against thee?" (Matt. xxvi. 62, 63.) "*But Jesus held his peace;*" disdaining even to notice the allegations of a suborned and prostituted testimony. How many



practical lessons are suggested to us by this behaviour of Jesus ! How forcibly does it teach aspersed innocence or calumniated virtue rather to endure with silent fortitude than to resent with clamorous impatience the malevolence of destruction !!!

The dignified silence in which Jesus persisted, excited some sensations of awe and gloom even in the bosom of the High Priest ; and which are distinctly marked in the vehemence, the earnestness, and solemnity of his next question. "*I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.*" (Matt. xxvi. 63.) This question was not unworthy an answer ; and Jesus remains no longer silent. He acknowledges that he is that great person whom the High Priest emphatically calls the Christ ; and he moreover adds ; " hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." The High Priest, taking advantage of this ingenuous declaration, which he had perhaps expected, and which Jesus, without dissimulation, could not have withheld, exclaims, " he hath spoken blasphemy, what farther need have we of witnesses ? behold, now, ye have heard his blasphemy." They shouted, " he is guilty of death," though Jesus was in fact known to the Jews only by the extent of his beneficence, though the

people had, but a little while before, followed him into the city with acclamations and hosannas, yet, as if their former affection had only served to inflame their present ferocity, they exerted all the force of imagination to load him with cruelty and insult. With almost incredible brutality "they spat in his face and buffeted him; and smiting him with the palms of their hands, called on him, in derision, to prophesy who smote him;"—him who had born their griefs and carried their sorrows!

From the High Priest's palace Jesus was "led to the hall of judgment; and they themselves went not in lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover." (John xviii. 28.) While they were meditating murder and deliberately violating every law divine and human, they adhered, with bigoted obstinacy, to a frivolous ceremony, and observed with scrupulous exactness the pious forms of a religious festival. How absurd and inconsistent is hypocrisy!

As the Jews refused to go into the hall, the Roman governor, with singular condescension, "went out unto them." (John xviii. 29.) "What accusation," said he, "bring ye against this man?" The chief priests now preferred their accusation; to which Jesus answered not a word; and Pilate seems to have been astonished

at his silence. (Matt. xxvii. 12, 13, 14.) After this, Pilate again interrogates Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" (John xviii. 33.) "*My kingdom,*" said Jesus, "*is not of this world*; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." Jesus does not deny his exalted dignity; though he declares that he does not aspire to a temporal dominion or a perishable crown. His kingdom is not from hence; he is the sovereign of a better country, where vice is not seen, whence faction is banished, and where only love prevails. His is an everlasting kingdom; and his sceptre one that shall never pass away. What dignity and authority does Jesus manifest through the whole of this judicial examination! He does not answer like a culprit; he makes no trembling confession, no laboured apology. He does not strive, *as an impostor in the same situation naturally would have done*, to expose the injustice or to soften the malice of his enemies, to interest the feelings of the spectators or to excite the admiration of the multitude. This is a very important consideration;—for, if we regard this trial as real, and it has every feature of reality, it proves that Jesus courted neither the patronage of the powerful nor the applause of the populace. But, had his powers been imaginary, his pretensions ideal, and his mission counterfeit, he would

*necessarily have laboured to conciliate the support either of the government or of the people.* For, on what other grounds, or by what other expedients, could he hope to take advantage of the public credulity, or to make the delusions of his imposture successful? But, during the whole recorded period of his ministry, both when in the zenith of his glory, when the people were hailing him with shouts of triumph, and, in the hour of his humiliation, when they were pursuing him with malignant execrations, he appeared neither elevated by their favour, nor depressed by their hate. In all variety of circumstances his dignity was the same and unaltered; his bosom was inaccessible to every sensation of aspiring ambition, or of pusillanimous fear.

Will the unbeliever pretend that *the detailed, circumstantial and consistent, the dissimilar but not incongruous, the varied but not dissonant accounts of this wonderful trial, by the four Evangelists, are a mere forgery?* Surely he will hardly hazard, and certainly he can never prove this bold assertion; and yet if we allow the accounts to be authentic and genuine, and the behaviour of Jesus on this trying occasion to have been such as the Evangelists have represented it, he must be aware that they tend in no small degree to attach credibility to the other parts of the Evangelists testimony,

and to shed the lustre of truth on the whole texture of the gospel-history.

Had the accounts of this trial been the work of imagination, it is not in the least probable, that the authors would have made the hero of their tale, in the very crisis of his fate, so submissive, so gentle, and so silent. *It is far more probable* that they would have made him refute the objections of his adversaries, vigorously defend the innocence of his life, and the purity of his doctrine, and strenuously appeal to the passions of the multitude, and to the sympathy of his judges.

To most of the questions, which are put to Jesus, he maintains an immoveable silence; but it is not the silence of froward fullness, but of superior dignity; it is the silence of conscious rectitude, made interesting by an inimitable gentleness, and exalted by a transcendant forbearance. And when he hears any interrogatory not unworthy a reply, he replies with eloquent facility; and his answers are not evasive, feeble and diffuse, but appropriate, concise and impressive, commanding attention and exciting astonishment. Indeed his whole behaviour is, a striking exhibition of true, not affected greatness;—it is the display of immortal majesty in the humility of a mortal form.



Pilate, learning that Jesus was a Galilean, sent him to Herod, the tetrarch of that province, who was then at Jerusalem, and whose curiosity had been long excited by his fame. "He hoped to have seen some miracle done by him;" (Luke xxiii. 8.) but Jesus never worked miracles for purposes not connected with the happiness or the instruction of mankind. Before Herod he remains resolutely silent; and makes no reply to his idle and impertinent inquiries. Disappointed in his hopes, and mortified in his pride, the resentment of the tetrarch was inflamed; and he sought to aggravate cruelty by insult. "With his men of war he set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate." (Luke xxiii. 11.)

Pilate, knowing that the Jews had no just grounds of accusation against Jesus, wished to release him. But the humane propositions of the governor were rejected with scorn, and the populace, instigated to madness by the artful representations of their rulers, clamoured for the execution with tumultuous violence. "Crucify him, crucify him," was their turbulent cry. This cry Pilate seems to have resisted for some time, and having heard that Jesus "made himself the son of God," he was, in the language of the Evangelist, "*the more afraid.*" (John xix. 8.) He accordingly asks Jesus, with eager solicitude,

"*Whence art thou?*" but Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate, construing the silence of the prisoner into a contempt of his authority, addresses him with impatient irritation, "*Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee?*" Jesus calmly and impressively replies, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above. Therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." Pilate apparently struck with this declaration, trembling with anxiety, and perhaps pricked with remorse, makes another effort to save him. The scruples of Pilate discovered some sense of justice; but it appears that he loved justice less than popularity and emolument. He exhibited that wavering instability of character which is so common in the world; which often maintains a transient contest between interest and principle, between present gratification and a sense of duty; but which is always at last governed by fear more than conscience, and by impulse rather than deliberation.

Convinced as was Pilate of the innocence of Jesus, and anxious to procure his release, yet he no sooner heard that such a measure would form a ground of accusation against him before Cæsar, (John xix. 12.) than with imbecility he consented to the murder. He yet endeavours to acquit his

conscience of the crime. "He took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just man. See ye to it." Matt. xxvii. 24.

Circumstances in life are continually occurring in which nothing is more criminal or destructive than irresolution. To be just it is necessary that we make justice a constant rule of action, and that we never deviate from it from any attractions of worldly interest. Had Pilate not been deficient in energy of character and in habits of moral obligation, he would not have "released Barabbas, and delivered Jesus to be crucified."

Jesus had yet to experience protracted torture and aggravated woe. The soldiers of Pilate "stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe; and when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head." Matt. xxvii. 28, 29, 30.

This wanton and unparalleled accumulation of wrongs and insults, Jesus endured in submissive silence. He returned not railing for railing. This magnanimity of his behaviour is well deserving of our imitation. How apt are we, puffed up

with a vain and artificial self-consequence, to ruminate with angry malignity over the very shadow of an insult ! A word spoken at random, and incidentally coming in collision with the false notions of our own importance, or exciting some remembrances of disgrace,—a casual glance or smile hastily construed into ill-will or derision, are often sufficient to kindle the fiercest animosities, or to terminate the oldest friendships. Our pride is of so irritable a nature, that we are at times ready to execrate the winds of heaven for visiting us too rudely.—One of the least of the insults which Jesus endured would be sufficient to inflame us with the rancour of a deadly hate. He was mocked, buffeted and spit on ; and the ingenuity of his enemies was strenuously exerted to diversify and sharpen his sensations of pain. “ *Yet he opened not his mouth.*” He was dumb before his accusers, his revilers, and tormentors. O divine image of heavenly forbearance, descend, I beseech thee, descend into our hearts ! sooth the envenomed acrimony of our passions, and check the inflammatory suddenness of our resentments !

When the Roman soldiers had exercised, even to satiety, their lust of cruelty on the patient Jesus, they led him away to be crucified. At first he seems to have been compelled to bear his own cross, (John xix. 17.) but, probably exhausted by

agony of mind and the long-continued series of his sufferings, he soon fainted under the load. It was then committed to one Simon a Cyrenian. (Luke xxiii. 26.)

As Jesus was passing to the place of execution "there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which bewailed and lamented him." We must not form so base an opinion of the Jews, as to suppose that this deed of blood was universally approved. There were certainly many who regarded the act with abhorrence, and the sufferer with sympathy;—many who could not so soon forget their friend, their instructor, and benefactor;—many who had been sick and were now in health, who had been halt and lame and were now whole, who had been deaf and could hear, blind and could see, dead and were now alive; and who followed him to the cross with sorrow and with tears. Of this train of mourners the majority appear to have been women, who are more susceptible of impressions of piety, of gratitude, of every amiable quality, and every tender affection, than the other sex, and who on this occasion had too much sympathy not to grieve, and too much resolution to conceal their grief.

The unfeigned lamentations of these pious persons were heard by Jesus, who, "turning unto



them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck ! Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ?" (Luke xxiii. 29, 30, 31.) He endeavours to avert their attention from himself to their own and their nation's woes. Like a good patriot, he forgets his own personal miseries when he contemplates those of his native country. He sees, in the distant future, the days coming, in which the vials of divine wrath would be poured upon Jerusalem ; and he admonishes his sorrowing friends of the impending danger, that they might be wise in time, and seek a refuge in repentance from the ruin of the approaching storm. When we suffer pain and misery, we are too apt to forget that there are others in pain and misery as well as ourselves, and who require the kindness and assiduity of friendship. Here too let us learn of Jesus not to let our own personal affections make us cold and selfish, negligent of others happiness, or insensible to others misery.

The pains of Jesus were now approaching to a termination. He was nailed to the cross between

two thieves. Innocence was placed in the midst of iniquity; purity was insulted by the contact of corruption.—But no indignities can disgrace the righteous. Every art which malice can practise, every insult which it can offer, every cruelty which it can perpetrate, recoils on it's own pate, and ends in it's own remorse.—If the inhumanity and the ingratitude of the world were such that a teacher sent from heaven, the divine pattern of benevolence, and the perfection of every virtue, was ranked among robbers and the outcasts of society, can we wonder that those who persevere in the strait path of Christian duty, should at times become the unheeded and unpitied victims of calumny, of cruelty, and injustice?—But virtue is honoured by disgrace, and piety is exalted by indignities. The good Christian, careless of temporal fame, must learn to disregard the envy and the malice of mankind; he must brave the breath of slander, and the venom of malignity. Let him who thinks that virtue is neglected, benevolence ill-rewarded, and righteousness depressed, look at Jesus, suffering on the cross between two thieves!!! Let him not only recollect that his flesh was pierced with nails, but his heart with insults!!! and, when he was beheld writhing in every extremity of anguish, the cruelty of his enemies was not abated. They discovered no sympathy towards him, they rather jested at his pains. “They reviled him wagging their heads.”

Even the chief priests, the scribes and elders, had not more humanity than the gross multitude. They mocked him with the same unfeeling cruelty. (Matt. xxvii. 41.)

But the tenderness of Jesus surpassed even the malice of his persecutors. While they are endeavouring to add venom to his wounds, and bitterness to his miseries, he prays to his heavenly father for their forgiveness. With that benign charity, of which he first taught the comprehensive duties, and first felt the celestial flame, he imputes their conduct to their ignorance. "Father! forgive them, for they know not what they do." Since the time of Jesus there have been several, who inhaling his spirit of forgiveness, have, at the very moment when they were undergoing the most excruciating sufferings, implored the divine mercy on their relentless persecutors. But does any part of history anterior to the Christian æra, present us with an instance of the same kind?

Socrates died with dignity and composure, amid the soothing consolations, the flattery and the admiration of his friends. Jesus suffered a death more exquisitely painful; and the pain was increased by every indignity which malice could contrive.

The firmness which is supported by applause, and by the expression of a cordial sympathy, sinks into dejection when attacked by scorn, humiliation and insult.

The Indian, indeed, when tied to the stake, and put to a lingering death by the severest tortures, which are lengthened out, by ingenious cruelty, to their longest span of endurance, will bear pain with unshaken firmness. The early habit of supporting pain, assisted by certain ferocious sentiments of national glory, and of individual ambition, generates that hardiness which can stifle the exclamations of suffering; but he who seems fortified by insensibility against misery, rather excites the sublime sensations of wonder, than the tender ones of commiseration.— We cannot well sympathise with those sufferings which the sufferer does not feel. We often gaze on insensibility with aversion, but never with tenderness.

What, in the midst of his sufferings, are the ruling sensations of the savage? Are they those of benevolence and forgiveness? No; they are the wild emotions of revenge, infuriated to madness. Every accession of pain or aggravation of torture only incenses his vindictive rage. He utters the most bitter and unrelenting execrations against his persecutors; he calls on his friends

and countrymen to retaliate his injuries with tenfold cruelty. His imagination anticipates the tortures of his oppressors; it portrays them in every writh and look of agony; and, so powerful is the energy of the vindictive principle, that the pleasures of revenge, though distant and uncertain, seem almost to absorb the pain of actual suffering.—In the hour of agony, the savage would revolt at the doctrine of forgiveness; his indignant spirit would spurn it as an inglorious act of pusillanimity or folly.

But lo! the difference between barbarous rage and Christian mildness. In the picture of Jesus, suffering on the cross, what a mixture is there of heroism with gentleness? How is his fortitude tempered by sensibility? He is not callous and impenetrable, but tremblingly alive to all the frail but truly captivating emotions of humanity. He does not affect a proud superiority to those feelings of pain, of which the privation, or rather the insensibility, is the result either of a brutal apathy or a disordered brain; and is never found in any character, that in the least deserves the name of amiable. The boasted indifference of the Stoic school is a point which mortality cannot reach; or which no one, who is acquainted with the pleasures and the consolations of sympathy, would wish to attain.



Sympathy is excited by a reciprocity of interests and of feelings; or, in other words, the interest which we take in the sufferings of others, is in proportion as we can identify their sensations with our own.—We can of course take no interest in the misery of one who is or seems to be insensate to the touch of pain. We can feel with those that feel, and who would accordingly sympathise with us in the like circumstances; but he, who is unconscious of his own sufferings, cannot be supposed to be easily affected by the sufferings of others. The power of sensation is associated with sympathy, and sympathy with the power of sensation.

The sufferings of Jesus excite a powerful interest, because he seems himself to have felt them with exquisite anguish. He was as feelingly conscious of his own miseries as of those of others. When then we behold him oppressed with grief and expiring in agony, we cannot help melting into tenderness. Our hearts glow with the silent raptures of love and sympathy.

The pain which Jesus endured, *and which was probably increased by causes with which we are unacquainted*, and to the operation of which we can never be exposed, seems to have been accumulated, till it produced an exclamation of despair. "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken

me?" It was the exclamation of piety tortured to distraction; and though it ought not to encourage us to cherish sensations of despondency, yet it proves that intense suffering excites *temporary distrust* even in the righteous. This exclamation deserves our consideration on another account; as it gives us a firm and happy assurance, that Jesus, who can feel, and who has felt, will compassionate all the diversified sensations and conditions of human misery. If he despaired, he will succour the desponding.—To him then, who is so conscious of our infirmities, to him, who has suffered hunger and thirst, penury and insult, exquisite mental and corporeal anguish, how cheerfully can we address our prayers, as the mediator between man and the eternal father? How safely can we rely on such an intercessor? And is not this one of the greatest privileges and comforts of Christianity?—In sickness, in anguish, in misfortune we have a kind condoling friend, the man Christ Jesus—ever attentive to our petitions, careful of our wants, and interested in our happiness. If we sin he is our advocate with the father, procuring our pardon on the condition of our repentance.

If, in this world, we experience injustice, if our beneficence be requited by ingratitude, our confidence by treachery, if nothing but hate and reproach wait on all our kind exertions, let us

endeavour to vanquish our impatience, and to sooth our acrimony by the spirit of gentleness and long-suffering.—The sincere Christian will expect, and will not shrink from a fiery trial. With patient fortitude he will submit to be stretched upon the cross,—a cross perhaps not made of wood, or pierced with nails, but the cross of an evil world, and of malicious tongues. “Blessed are ye,” said the author of our faith, and the only stay of our hope, “when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.” And let not the sense of any wrongs which we may experience from our fellow-creatures, fear and harden the tenderness of our hearts. Let it not infuse into us *the deadly poison of worldly wisdom*; let it not teach us, as alas! it teaches too many, to substitute subtlety for ingenuousness, chicane for honesty, prevarication for truth, and dissimulation for sincerity.—Let us beg our heavenly father to forgive even the most bitter of our enemies; and that prayer can not fail of persuading us to forgive them.

From these reflections let us again turn our eyes upon the cross! We have now contemplated our Saviour in almost every posture and combination of agony. His last suffering was that of thirst, which is, I believe, usually experienced on such occasions; and which in Jesus at this moment

raged with great intenseness. He exclaimed, "I thirst." But no sympathy was excited in his enemies. They only mocked him by an offer of vinegar made bitter with hyssop. (John xix. 29.) In this, as in various other particulars of this heart-rending tragedy, they fulfilled, without knowing or intending it, the predictions of old. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he cried out, "It is finished; and, bowing his head, he gave up the ghost;" (John xix. 30.) when instantly, "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints, which slept, arose." (Matt. xxvii. 51, 52.) The sentence of death which had been brought upon all men by the transgression of Adam was now repealed; and those who sat in darkness, and in the land of the shadow of death, were cheered with the rays of immortality.

"When the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matt. xxvii. 54.) May the whole world, in the undiminished fervour of conviction, make the same confession!

May the several circumstances of the crucifixion, which we have considered in their regular order, strengthen our faith in him who is "the

resurrection and the life!" From his cross may the benevolent streams of love and sympathy flow into our hearts! From his cross may we learn long-suffering, patience, magnanimity, forbearance, and every virtue of that true and heavenly philosophy which exalts and softens the heart, and prepares it for an eternal inheritance in a happier world!!!



A PICTURE OF  
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

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*Jefus a martyr to truth.*

THE sufferings of Jefus are greatly ennobled by this confideration;—that they were a willing testimony to the truth. All truth, as well phyfical as moral, is connected with the well-being of man; but moral truth\* is of the greateft confe-

\* A few men think for all the reft of the world. They give to opinions what fhapec and complexions they think proper. The mere whistle of a name leads the mafs of mankind aftray, like a “Will-with-a-wisp.”

It was once the fafhion to adopt no notions but thofe which had Aristotle’s fanktion. It is now a fort of high treason to call in queftion certain tenets, on which certain great doftors, who have fucceeded to the chair of prefumption and infallibility, in which the Stagyrite ufed to fit, have affixed their feal of approbation.

quence, as it relates to the influence of human conduct on human happiness; and is not merely

The majority of minds are passive; they resemble wax which receives no impression, but that which is given to it by a power foreign to itself.—Whatever opinions some popular dogmatists may prescribe, they transfer, without hesitation, to their own flock; without staying to examine whether they be true or false, coherent or absurd.

Thus it happens, that the greater portion of what is called human knowledge, is nothing but an incongruous mixture of prejudices,—a crude consistence of truth, of error, and of folly.

Every opinion is a prejudice which is adopted without an enquiry into it's truth; and, if it be on a perplexed and dubious subject, without at least balancing the probabilities that make for it's support or it's refutation. Opinions adopted from the mere "ipse dixit" of any authority, however great that authority may be, are equally prejudices with those which are adopted without enquiry.

However true the notions, in themselves, may be which we adopt without examination, they are no better than falsehood with respect to us, if not knowing the grounds on which they rest, we are neither able to justify them to ourselves nor to others.—To assent to any proposition, without knowing the arguments on which it is established, is a shameless contempt for the sacredness of truth. The first indication of a respect for truth is a repugnance to form hasty conclusions, or draw hasty inferences; but what can tend more strongly to season the mind with error, and to lessen the aversion to falsehood, than the habit of concluding without evidence, and of inferring without knowing why?

The majority of people indeed are obliged rather to act than to think, and to employ the body more than the mind. But of those who have leisure for reflection, and whose aggregate

related to a present and perishable, but to a future and eternal interest. It was for this truth, that Jesus suffered; and, in defence of which, he has taught us to make life a willing sacrifice.

numbers may be called the moral strength of nations, how few are there who do not swallow opinions like apothecaries pills?— and they are usually found to turn to as little nourishment.

But would men, instead of adopting opinions at random, seriously examine their truth, and particularly the truth of those which have a considerable influence on the happiness of mankind, would they but endeavour to analyse popular dogmas, instead of being enchanted by the witchcraft of great names, that veil of ignorance would soon be rent, which now hides some of the most beautiful parts of the shrine of truth.

The produce of truth must be in proportion to the number of minds employed in its production. If, instead of one person thinking for a thousand, that thousand would venture to think for themselves, the progress of mind and the accumulation of knowledge would proceed with a thousand times its present velocity.

There is no occasion to fear lest the means of supplying materials for the consumption of the aggregate energy of so many minds, should at last be exhausted. Truth admits not the relations of quantity. It is an infinite series; and is spread over an illimitable horizon.

The continually augmenting mental power of finite intelligences tends, by condensing particular into general truths, to approximate all the varieties of human knowledge to unity; but without ever reaching it. The power of ultimate simplification belongs to God alone; to whom all time is as one instant present, all space as one point, and all the multifarious laws and complicated mechanism of universal nature as simple as a single grain of sand upon the shore.

The diffusion of truth can never be essentially injurious to mankind. For, though it may require the subversion of long-existed errors, and these errors, by mingling with it's benign, their malignant influence, may cause some disorders; yet it should always be remembered, that these disorders do not indicate the perniciousness of truth, but the obstinacy of error. All error being in itself an evil, the nature of counteracting causes will always occasion some evil to attend it's removal.

As any disease, long seated in the human frame, struggles against the remedies that are taken to remove it, and is not at last removed without much intermediate pain, so diseases in the body moral or politic seem, in some measure, to feel the energies of a self-preserving power; and are seldom effectually subdued without an obstinate resistance.

But we must be careful not to impute to truth the mischiefs that belong to error; for it may be esteemed an incontestable maxim, that *truth is never mischievous*. It neither has nor can have any tendency to create disorder or to engender misery.—Truth is indeed the perfection of order, and the consummation of happiness; the highest attainment of reason, and the sublimest enjoyment of man.

There cannot be a more absurd or ruinous notion entertained than this,—That truth is occasionally pernicious. Truth and falsehood are not of a changeable but a fixed nature. The first is essentially and radically good; the last is essentially and radically bad; independent of all local and temporal relations whatever. In the first therefore consists the happiness, in the last the misery of man; and no modification of circumstances ought, for a moment, to be permitted to set aside the sacredness of truth, or the ignominy of falsehood.

If we were once to admit that any accidental relations whatever can alter the nature or deform the beauty of truth, we are guilty of denying its fixed and unchangeable essence. Truth ought not to stoop to political or to individual convenience.—To pretend that what is truth to-day may be falsehood and error in a change of circumstances, is to subvert, at one blow, all the relations that bind men together in society. We are changing a fixed and immoveable criterion of human actions, for one that is as precarious as the winds. Political convenience is shifting every hour; and if truth be to shift with it, and to follow it in all its eccentricities, there is an end to its existence. It is truth no longer; for truth implies immutability.



Political and private convenience ought to bend to truth ; not truth to them ; and of this be assured, O ye sons of Adam ! that public happiness will rest upon a quicksand, till ye are universally convinced that ye can have *no interest distinct from truth*, and that it alone is the immortal basis of public and private glory !!!

Truth, being of a fixed unalterable nature, and as opposite to falsehood as misery is to happiness, it ought not to be tampered with. It ought not to be made the supple cameleon-like changing of individual or political whim and artifice. Nor ought it *ever to be concealed*. To suppress the lively oracles, or to veil the divine image of truth, in order to serve any paltry ends of human policy, is to outrage the God of truth.

It was either a false delicacy or a designing dishonesty which gave rise to this maxim :—“ Truth ought not to be spoken at all times.” Moral truth,—that truth which is of an eternal and unperishable influence, ought neither to be shrouded in mystery nor to be frittered away in ambiguity.—Truth, *the whole truth*, should be displayed to the world, not tricked out with the harlotry of artifice ; but beautiful in it's naked simplicity.—The currency of gold may be assisted by a portion of alloy ; but truth shines brightest when undebased by error.

Were the nature and properties of truth justly appreciated, and it's eternal value rightly understood, there would be no occasion for any of it's champions to lay down their lives upon it's altar ; but, at present, while error is so much careffed, and falsehood so stoutly defended by corrupt and interested hirelings, it is necessary that the votaries of truth should be ready and willing to bleed in it's defence.

We should bear witness to the truth " looking unto Jesus," whose lips were never polluted with a falsehood ; and who taught his disciples that those shall gain life, who lay it down for his sake ; or for the fixed, eternal and unchangeable truths which he promulgated ; and which it is our duty to maintain, with unshaken courage, and at the expense of every worldly interest.

## A PICTURE OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

*A future life—an immaterial principle—the truth  
of the resurrection of Jesus—practical inferences,  
&c. &c.*

Few arguments for a future life are supplied by the view of nature. The world around us seems a perpetual struggle between life and death; a scene of incessant decay; a scheme of destruction always going on, and never completed.

The race of man appears as if born only to die. Successive generations successively disappear, and moulder into dust like their fathers. Virtue and vice, learning and ignorance obey the common sentence of mortality, and meet together in the grave.

What constitutes the spirit of man, or whether there be, in man, any spirit, distinct from his animal organization, the light of nature, glimmering and dubious, cannot unfold to us. The human mind is often stored with many sublime ideas; its conceptions soaring above worldly objects, at times, seem like the emanations of Pure Intelligence; yet there are some physical reasons for supposing that this very mind, which seems impregnated, as it were, with fire from heaven, is no more than the result of the harmonious combination and vigorous exercise of material organs \*. Our ideas are, according to

\* We exceed the brutes in no organ so much as that of touch; and which is the reason why our sensations are more exquisite than theirs. Perhaps men differ from each other in nothing more than in the greater or less excitability of their sense of touch; and, consequently, in the greater or less delicacy and distinctness of their sensations.

Perception is only a modification of sensation; and perceptions are strong and vivid, as sensations are distinct and lively. Thus the man of genius differs from others principally in the faculty of sensation.

Our senses of vision, hearing, smelling, tasting, may probably consist in a greater excitability of the same power, which constitutes touch, residing in the eye, the ear, the palate, &c. &c. Thus in the olfactory nerves this power may be so exquisitely refined as to be excitable by invisible effluvia; in the nerves of the ear by the least vibrations of the air; in the nerves of sight by impressions as delicate and impalpable as the reflection of objects on the retina.

The supposition, that all our senses are only modifications of

the opinions of the most acute philosophers, the produce only of the senses ; and the senses themselves are evidently organic fibres, capable of excitement by their proper stimuli.

Our senses are our only possible means of communication with the external world or with ourselves. In other words, it is only through the medium of sense, that we can obtain any knowledge of the world without us ; and that we can attend to the reflex operations of our own minds. Take from man the sense of feeling, hearing, tasting, smelling, seeing, he would be destitute of ideas, and incapable of reflection. It is, by means of our senses, that we are able to retrace the ideas, with which they originally brought us acquainted, to diversify their forms, and to arrange them under such new combinations, as that they sometimes appear to have no relation to any thing in nature, and to be the simple, spontaneous, unmixed progeny of the mind. But we can have no ideas that have not a sensual original.

one and the same power (but which in particular organs, as the eye, the ear, the palate, is made susceptible of different degrees of excitement) accounts for that parity, and, as it were, unity of sensation, which constitutes, what may be called, self-feeling.—Hence we can, at the same time, have the enjoyment of hearing, seeing, smelling, &c. without any confusion or indistinctness of sensation ; which would happen, if there were not ultimately and essentially unity in the sensorial power.



It may be said, that our abstract ideas, as virtue, &c. which have no relation to sensible images, are attained, not through the medium of the senses of seeing, &c. but, in some measure, by a total oblivion that we have such senses, or by a suspension of their operation. This error seems to spring from not considering, that all ideas, even those which are most complex, are nothing more than the combination of many particular ideas, and which are the offspring of individual and simple sensation.

In figures, we consider a collection of many particulars as constituting unity;—as, for instance, when we say a thousand, or a million. These are complex terms, of which, when we mention them in a rapid and cursory manner, we have no precise ideas, and can have none, till we resolve them into those simple and individual terms, of which they are abbreviations. It is the same in what are called abstract terms. When we mention the term, *virtue*, we have no fixed or definite ideas of the thing itself, till we come to consider it, as it were, under its individual personalities, its numerous subdivisions, and to sum up the particular terms, of which it is an abbreviation. Abstract terms ought to be always considered as abbreviations of many particulars; in the same manner as the term *a thousand* is of so many units. The necessity of these abbreviations arises from

the limited capacity of the mind, which cannot attend to many particulars at once, and which, therefore, for the sake of expediting it's operations, that would otherwise be infinitely slow and tedious, has resorted to the invention of general and abstract terms.

As to abstract ideas, there are, in fact, no such things. An idea, means a distinct perception; and those, whose ideas are rather confused and fluttering vibrations, than distinct and definite perceptions, will find them but of little service, and producing ignorance rather than knowledge. Now when we mention any abstract idea, as virtue, what distinct perception have we of the thing itself? It is a word which we may easily pronounce; but of which, in fact, we can hardly have more definite notions than a parrot, till we have resolved it into it's several, simple, constituent ideas, and traced it through it's individual and particular relations. But having once done this, and having obtained, as it were, distinct perceptions of the meaning of the general term, we may, afterwards, apply it either in writing, or conversation, or reflection, with as much precision and advantage, as if all the particulars it includes were, at that very moment, present to the mind\*.

\* This shews the necessity of fixing a precise and definite signification to words; or otherwise, we must write and talk we know not what, like magpies and parrots. Some persons

If we have no ideas whatever that are not derived from the organs of sense, mere natural

say, "if you have ideas you will never want words;" but the contrary rather holds good; for we can have but very few ideas without words; and as all our ideas, if we had no language, would be simple sensations, we could carry on no long train or process of reasoning, any more than we could count far without figures, or signs to express the different combinations of unity.

Those who can annex to each word they use it's definite and appropriate signification cannot be barren of ideas.

As the majority of our ideas have not a real, palpable and independent existence, their vitality, if I may so express it, consists merely in the symbols, which give them a "local habitation and a name." Those, therefore, who possess precise and definite notions of the meaning of these symbols, can hardly help being rich in ideas.

A mere rapid declaimer may indeed eructate all the froth of verbose oratory, though without accurately knowing, or rightly discriminating the terms he uses; but to use words with fitness, and so as to excite distinct perceptions, and to combine them with beauty so as to fill the mind, not with disproportioned and monstrous, but with natural and symmetrical images, shews a just taste and a well-regulated understanding.

The practice, therefore, of beginning education by teaching the precise signification of words is the best and philosophic method. But, as words are the symbols of sensations, means should be taken, as much as possible, by means of diagrams and other contrivances, to excite the particular sensations they express. In other words—children should be made to acquire distinct perceptions of the terms they use. The progress of mind would then be greatly accelerated; the human understanding, no longer liable to be bewildered in the maze of crude half-formed notions, would not remain in a state of childhood, as it now often does, from infancy to old age.

reason would, at first sight, lead us to conjecture that the mind perishes with the body. If the mind be a part, though the most perfect part of our animal organization, it seems necessarily involved in it's destruction.

But, perhaps, it will be said, that, though all our ideas are the product of the senses, there is in man a principle essentially different from the organs of sense; and that this principle is volition\*.

\* Volition, is that faculty which, according to the energy with which it operates in the individual, causes the intellectual faculties to act with greater or less vigour, and produces the various degrees of mental capacity.

The object of most men, in every sphere of life, and in every direction, which the faculties take, is agreeable sensation. This is the ultimate end of all the pursuits of man; and, in quest of this, he willingly incurs many disagreeable sensations, which are often intermediate steps to the object which he desires. The desire of pleasure, though at a distance, often overcomes the aversion to intermediate pain; and which may exceed the pleasure in reality, though not in the estimation of the pursuer.

We are led, probably, by early sympathies, which give a peculiarly strong and lasting impulse to individual desire, to associate the idea of agreeable sensation, in a more especial manner, with this or that particular pursuit. This causes us to pursue it with eagerness; it rouses the faculty of volition to endeavour, as it were, to seize it by great exertions.

It is a common and every-day expression, that men can do well what they have a genius for; which means no more than this;—that men can do well what they like to do well; or, in

But let us consider whether volition itself be a principle distinct from our animal organization, or only a product of it.

other words—that they usually excel most in that particular pursuit or employ, which sympathy or habit has made a source of agreeable sensation.

Agreeable sensation is the strongest stimulus that can be used to excite volition ; and the proficiency of men in any attainment, whether of art or science, is always in a direct proportion to the degree of voluntary power employed in it. “*Possunt quia posse videntur.*” A strong degree of volition overpowers difficulties, which would appal the timid ; and from which the luke-warm would shrink with dismay.

Hence, Genius may be created. If you can once make a child firmly believe that his greatest happiness resides in this or that particular pursuit ; or, in other words, that such pursuit will be the means of a greater sum of agreeable sensation than any other, it will become to him an object that will prompt to vehement desire, and to vigorous exertion. A thousand associations, all flowing from, or connected with, agreeable sensation, and directed towards the favourite object, will conspire to call forth more than ordinary energies of action.

Why do children usually love their playthings better than their books, but, because the former are to them a more prolific source of agreeable sensation ? If their books possessed a greater power of agreeable sensation, they would throw away their playthings, as eagerly as they now usually lay aside their books. Hence, the motto for children's books ought to be, “*delectare et prodesse ;*” and in the first period of childhood, at least, no books should be put into their hands which do not tend to improve them, by combining instruction with pleasurable sensation.

If you wish your child to excel in any particular pursuit, you must learn *artfully to manage the exciting power of sympathy ;*



We are made by nature exquisitely sensible to pleasure and to pain. Hence we become ac-

you must endeavour, in very early life, to associate in his mind, with the object of excellence, every possible idea of agreeable sensation; which will act as a perpetual and continually increasing stimulus, urging him to exert, in that pursuit with which he has been habitually used to connect sensations of pleasure, a peculiar and accumulated degree of voluntary power. It is the strong and powerful excitement of volition, which counteracts the "vis inertiae," the gravitating force of sloth, that cramps even the moral powers of man; and which imparts to the natural sluggishness of the mind, the strength, the majesty and the swiftness of the eagle.

When a great degree of volition is excited, it always produces great exertions. Genius may be denominated, a high degree of volition employed in a particular pursuit. Hence the cause of the different modifications and kinds of genius.—Some connect the power of agreeable sensation either with poetry, or with oratory, or with any of the arts, more strongly than with any other pursuit. And hence, that particular pursuit becomes their predominant propensity. That is, always the predominant propensity of men, which, by having been, in their minds, most habitually associated with agreeable sensations, has become, by the powerful but invisible agency of sympathy, the cause of their greatest happiness.

Why was Sir Joshua Reynolds more fond of painting, than of statuary, or of hunting, or fishing, or any thing else? Certainly, because from some strong sympathy, excited in very early life, he had been led to associate more agreeable sensations with the use of his pencil and his pallet, than with any other kinds of exertion. As he advanced in life, his fondness for his art, probably, increased. The pleasures of imagination, unlike the gross pleasures of sense, do not pall and grow

quainted both with agreeable and with disagreeable sensations; and we cannot have been

faint, but increase and become more vigorous, according to the frequency of indulgence.

The agreeable sensations which Sir Joshua had connected with his favourite pursuit, were augmented by many adventitious sources of pleasure,—by habit, by fame, and by all the charms commonly associated with celebrity. All these agreeable sensations were, in some measure, blended into unity; and produced an extraordinary degree of volition, which increased the power of excellence.

Men never pursue with that eagerness and ardor which is necessary to the attainment of excellence, or to splendor of success, any thing which is not associated in their minds with agreeable sensations, or with the idea of present or the hope of future happiness.

Hence, genius often droops without a certain degree of encouragement; because despair tends to banish agreeable sensation, which is the source of increased volition, and, consequently, of increased activity of mind. On the other hand, great and extraordinary encouragement, or an unexpected accession of wealth, or of the means by which a great source of enjoyment is at once put into our possession, often tends, in the same degree, to produce languor, and relax exertion.

The possession of great temporal advantages, increasing the power of gratification, too usually causes sensual to absorb the desire of mental pleasure; and, besides, we must consider that it is not so much the possession of pleasure, as the desire, combined with the hope of obtaining it, that stimulates to extraordinary activity.

That volition, which is the central fire of genius, is not so much kindled by objects, that are near and only a hand's-breadth from us, as by those which are less distinct, and

long in the world before the experience of the last has made us regret the absence of the first.

can only be seen, as it were, twinkling at the edge of the horizon.

Many a man of genius would have experienced a diminution of his energy, or an aversion rather than a desire to exert it, if he had enjoyed the full extent of those advantages, for which, perhaps, he anxiously sighed, and had been rewarded to the full boundary of his merit by pensions and emoluments.

Necessity, is the cradle in which genius is most frequently fondled to maturity. If the royal patronage did not impair the faculties of Johnson, at least it produced, except in one or two instances, a great unwillingness to exert them. His two great works, his Dictionary and his Rambler, of which the last will transmit his name to posterity, were produced in a state of indigence.

It would be a nice and most useful calculation, which should fix, what degree of encouragement ought to be afforded to men of genius, and which would rather invigorate than depress the active principle,

There have been, indeed, instances in which no encouragement, however great, and no neglect, however distressing, could, in the least, weaken the energies of the mind, or slacken the activity of pursuit. In these cases, an impetuous and overbearing desire of fame, rather than of the emoluments of fortune, has been associated with the object of pursuit, and rendered, by sympathy, the only source of agreeable sensation; and as this desire of fame can never be satisfied, but usually increases in proportion to it's gratification, it imparts to the volition an astonishing energy, and awakens all the powers of the soul to unwearied activity. It was this love of fame which, in Milton, overcame obstacles that were almost insurmountable; and communicated to his genius a vigor more than mortal.

From the sensations of pleasure or of pain, springs desire or aversion: and hence originates volition; which is nothing more than the practical energy either of desire or of aversion. Volition, then, is the necessary result of the peculiar organization of our bodies. Possessing a frame so exquisitely adapted to the gentle or the violent impulses of pleasure or of pain, we, necessarily, will the one positively, and the other negatively.

Volition, is the ultimate result of sensation; and accordingly, all animals\* possess it, though in a far less degree than man, and proportioned to their degree of irritability and sensibility.

It is the passion for fame, that often renders the active principle capable of incredible exertions. Thus the truly-ambitious man,—he who feels in his bosom the ever-burning flame of that devouring passion, is commonly, in those pursuits in which his ambition centres, the most vigilant and indefatigable of men.

The reader will, I trust, pardon the length of this note, from it's relation to a subject of infinite importance to human happiness, I mean,—the *economy of mind*,—the most interesting topic in the whole sphere of human enquiry.—At some future period, I hope that I may have health and leisure to say more on this subject.

\* The comparative feebleness of the voluntary power, in brutes, seems, to me, to be in a great measure owing to the greater comparative numbness, and, as it were, *locality* of their sense of touch,—that sense whose vitality and delicacy is present in almost every part of the human body.

Natural reason, therefore, arguing from the nature of man, can by no means prove that volition is a principle distinct from the material tissue of the animal economy, or that it survives it's decay.

The voluntary power, whether it relates to the production of muscular or mental action, evidently sympathises with the declension of the power of animal life. As the fibres of our bodies, whether from the effects of intemperance, or sickness, or from the withering touches of age, become less irritable, volition grows more feeble.

Nothing can prove this more strongly than the decay of the memory\* in drunkards and in old people; in whom, as the sensual fibres become less irritable to natural stimuli, and particularly to pleasurable sensation, the voluntary power becomes proportionally impaired. Memory is, indeed, only a modification of the voluntary

\* Strength of memory, depends on strength of volition; and which again depends on the degree of sensation, by which it is excited. Thus we may account for the diversity of memories. All persons incline to remember, with most distinctness and accuracy, that which they have been most frequently used to associate, in their minds, with pleasurable sensations. These sensations invigorate the voluntary power; and which, in it's turn, impels and invigorates the power of memory.



power, reviving, according to the degree of its energy, the past associations of the sensual fibres.

It has been said above, that the strength of volition depends greatly on the power of sensation; so it is remarkable, that old people can often more readily recal the events of their youth, than the transactions of yesterday; because the former have been more connected with agreeable sensations. These inspire the volition with an energy sufficient to revive the associations of youth; while it, in vain, strives to bring back more recent impressions. They elude the grasp of the will, and flit into eternal oblivion, like the dreams of the morning.

From what has been said on this subject, we must, I think, come to this conclusion—That our susceptibility of pleasure or pain, by exciting desire or aversion, necessarily creates volition. Volition, therefore, being in itself an effect, cannot survive its cause; which, in an ultimate analysis, will be found to consist in the power of irritation and sensation; or, in other words, the vital principle (whatever it may be) which is inherent in all animal bodies, but more nicely modified in, and more exquisitely combined with, those of the human species.

But it may be said, that we possess a principle

of consciousness distinct from the principle of volition; and though connected with, by no means produced by, or resulting from our animal organization.

There seems a good deal of similitude between memory and consciousness\*; but they are not essentially the same. Memory retraces the perceptions and relations of past time; but the power of consciousness concentrates our past sensations and perceptions in unity of time and place; and binds together the diversity of our organic motions, in the perception of individuality or undivided personality. It is the power of

\* The author of *Zoonomia* says, vol. i. 132. "We are only conscious of our existence when we think about it; as we only perceive the lapse of time when we attend to it; when we are busied about other objects, neither the lapse of time nor the consciousness of our own existence can occupy our attention."

We appear never for a moment to be without the consciousness of personality; though *we do not always attend to it so far as to make it a subject of reflection*. All reflection is an exertion of volition, but not the smallest effort of volition is necessary to excite the idea of personality, unless when we desire to identify our present with our past being.—And I am inclined to believe, that the consciousness of personality is attached, though by an invisible and impalpable chain, to every one of our ideas; and is associated, even without our perceiving it, with every change that happens in the sensory. The contrary supposition would, at least, corroborate that theory of ideas which was maintained by the acuteness of Berkeley and of Hume.

consciousness which makes the present and the past contemporaneous, and incorporates all our notions and sensations in one simple notion and sensation of identity\*.

There is a daily and hourly waste of our frame†. An incessant change is continually going on in us; and we never rise in the morning, with precisely the same bodies in which we went to bed at night.

It is remarkable, that we should be conscious that we are the same identic individuals now,

\* May not *identity* have two significations? one implying a sensation of our present individuality, the other connecting the idea of our present individuality with our past existence?

† In the centre of every individual, there seems a consuming power, which is continually opposing, and which finally destroys the power of life. Individuals soon perish, if the daily assimilation do not balance the daily waste. As the strength of the stomach and intestines to assimilate the food we take to the animal matter of our bodies declines, the flame of animal life, wanting nutriment, grows fainter and fainter, till it is totally extinguished.

In young, healthy, and robust individuals, the consuming power is considerably less than the assimilating. In the meridian of life, the process of our destruction and of our renovation, keeps pretty even; at a later season, if I may recur to a very common but apt illustration, our sand runs out faster than nature supplies it, or than art can renew it;—and the worm finally feasts on our remains!!!

that we were twelve or twenty years ago, when we, perhaps, retain not a single particle of the same bodies we had then. The body keeps continually changing; but the consciousness, as far as it respects individuality, remains the same and unchanged. Neither our passions, our affections, our appetites, our desires, our aversions, our judgment, our volition, our memory, continue without change;—the consciousness alone undergoes none.

Does there not, therefore, seem to be, in every individual, a principle or power of consciousness\*, totally distinct from the animal organiza-

\* The power of consciousness, though it should not be immaterial, yet may be a fluid more subtle than light or heat, situated in the sensory, and sensible to, but not itself altered by the elementary changes of the mortal body. It is no sound objection to the existence of a power of consciousness in the body, that it is not always perceptible, or that it cannot be brought within the cognizance of the senses. The fluid of gravitation is, probably, diffused through every particle of matter, and yet we neither see it nor feel it; nor have yet been able, by any palpable test, to demonstrate its existence. We have yet proceeded no farther towards proving its existence, than can be done by alledging strong arguments against its non-existence.

It may be objected, that if we do possess such a principle of consciousness, as I have stated, distinct from our animal nature, connected with it in life, but not associated with it in death, why can we not connect, by the consciousness of individuality, the earliest period of infancy with our present existence? It

tion, and by no means dependant on it, or involved in it's dissolution? This consciousness seems to be the spiritual body which St. Paul mentions\*, and which may be folded up in the natural; and which, after death, may grow and expand into a nobler existence; as the butterfly displays it's variegated wings when the grub expires.

The natural world presents but few arguments, or analogies, in support of a continuation of individual existence; or, in other words, of the extinction of consciousness in one state of being, and of it's renewal in another. In nature, we behold a most abundant provision made for the continuance of the species, but none for that of the individual. Every thing contains the principle of reproduction, either in itself, or by communion with it's kind. But if the progeny survive the death of the parent, they sooner or later mingle with the dust of their fathers.

Amid all the admirable contrivances of nature, for the reproduction of the species of all the myriads

may be answered, that the power of consciousness, while it remains in the body, can exert no power independant of the organs, to which it is attached; but that when death has liberated it from the manacles of flesh, it will display it's energies pure and uncontrouled.

\* 1 Cor. xv. 44.



of organized nature, where shall we behold any for that of the same individual? Man himself seems to perish like the flower of the field. He lives, perhaps, a few years; he reproduces his kind; and he vanishes into darkness. The same individual is seen no more. He eludes our touch and our vision, like the shadow of the cloud that has passed over the earth.

The butterfly has, indeed, often been considered as a continuation of the individual, and an emblem of immortality. The grub, that disgusted by its loathsome appearance, or that crawled on the earth in sluggish dulness, lies for a time in a state of apparent insensibility and death, till, at last, bursting its coffin, it revisits the day-light, with gay and florid wings; delighting by the beauty of its colours and the sprightliness of its movements; and exciting sympathy in the beholder, by its seeming consciousness of the agreeableness of its own sensations. But is the butterfly at all conscious of having been a grub?

Where, and in what part of nature, will you find the most remote analogy of a continuation of individual consciousness? No where;—and without such a continuation, the individual is, in fact, annihilated, though the several parts of his former animal frame may pass into a thousand diverse forms, shapes and combinations. A con-

tinuation of the same individuality, means an annexed consciousness, connecting present and past identity. Without this, there can be no continuation of the same individual.

When the individual man dies, his body, resolving into it's primary particles, soon assimilates to the molecules of other bodies. But the individual suffers nothing by this process of deterioration, as long as none of his former consciousness passes into the vegetable or the worm. Again, suppose that the particles of the human body should, immediately after death, migrate into some purer substance, which forms the nature of higher orders of intelligence. This ameliorated state of existence would, by no means, be a continuation of the same individual, without an annexed consciousness of past identity.— But supposing, as seems probable, that there is a principle or power of consciousness attached to every individual, distinct from the animal economy, and not involved in it's dissolution, the idea of a future existence becomes more simple and intelligible \*. The moment the individual

\* I can readily concede to the author of *Zoonomia* that ideas are fibrous motions of the organs of sense. But it nevertheless appears to me that there is in the human body a sentient principle, which may have a very intimate connexion with the organs of sense, and yet be as different from them, as light is from the surface from which it is reflected, or as the

perishes, his consciousness passes into other regions, and allies itself to a more glorified body.

muscular contractions and the vital circulation are from the vital principle.

Has the power which sorts, abstracts, combines, necessarily an homogeneous formation with the separate and divided powers through which the materials for these operations are communicated? Different ideas come from the sight, the touch, the hearing, &c. but they all meet in one and the same point; like the rays of a circle in the centre. The point in which they meet, must be unity, to give that unity of operation, which is evident in the action of the mental power; and, consequently, *the power which thinks, must be different from the organic parts*, which furnish subjects for reflection.

The many exquisite harmonies that result from the pulsation of musical wires, are not so properly caused by the wires, as by the fingers that beat those wires, and the volition, the *invisible force* which excites the powers of melody. The vocal sounds or motions are the effect of the chords, but the melodious strains are caused by a superior energy. In the same way ideas *may be sensorial motions*, but the master power which regulates and combines those motions, which gives them order and concord, and at whose breath, as it were, the fibres assume a vivid animation, must be of a very different nature from the motions or the fibres themselves. The percipient vehicles may be a convolution of an infinite series of nerves, but the soul, or the mind, or whatever else it may be called, which summons into action all these delicate filaments, which harmonizes their discordancies, and elicits their energies, seems a simple element. If we suppose the soul to be a divisible and combined force, a congeries of sensitive fibres, how can we account for it's indivisible and simultaneous action? On the supposition of it's divisibility, the parts can only act in succession; and some time, however minute, must lapse between each successive

Some have considered the general expectation of a future life, which seems to be diffused over

motion. But on this supposition, how happens it, that sometimes a variety of ideas, of different kindreds and nations, of present and past time, are beheld at once in the mind, and at one point of time?

What constitutes individuality? By individuality I mean individual consciousness, that which makes a person who is composed of so many different members and faculties, seem the same, and as much unity, as if he were only one simple element; that which assimilates various feelings, which condenses the thousand different sensations that come from different quarters, in one and the same point. What makes us unity in different situations, different ideas, under so many different impressions? If ideas constitute consciousness, what can render us conscious of being the same, while the mind is under the influence of so many opposite and unconnected ideas? That power, whatever it be, which gives unity and individuality to the operations of so many fibres, appears to me to constitute what is commonly called the soul.

On the supposition of the soul's being an immaterial particle, or even a very subtle ether, the extinction of the body cannot affect it's powers or existence. On the dissolution of it's animal covering it may vanish in a moment, to be incorporated with matter in other forms, in other worlds. As light, though a fine material body, travels with an almost incalculable velocity through the ethereal space, so the soul having parted with it's gross material incumbrances, may travel with a velocity still greater, and surpassing calculation. It may pass in an instant, on the cessation of the animal life to which it is annexed, to an inconceivable distance into other worlds, in which it's existence is to be after death.

That matter once organized will sooner or later revive in other organic forms, no one who seriously contemplates the

every region of the globe, and to have prevailed in all ages in the world,—as evidence of it's certainty.

book of nature, can doubt, The body of Virgil may flourish in the bays that grow upon his grave.

The Grecian preface of a future life, a glorious futurity, from the transformation of a maggot to a butterfly, is happy. But this idea, though it may suggest the hopes of a future existence, excites none of the consciousness of personal identity; of a consciousness of a prior existence, continued in a future. But without such a consciousness I cannot look forward to a future state with any more pleasure than I can look back on a past, of which I am unconscious. Whether the human body exist hereafter in another shape and with more glorious powers, it is of no consequence to the individual if he cannot draw the comparison between present happiness and past misery, if he cannot identify the one with the other, if he cannot look back with satisfaction on the wreck he has escaped, and the woes which he is to endure no more!!

I suppose ideas to be certain forms identified with the organs of sense, and capable of excitement and reproduction by the stimuli of pleasure and pain, volition and association. If ideas be certain forms identified with the organs of sense, they may give personality to the separate fibres, but how can they give unity to the complicated web of sensitive powers which are spread over the body? Every idea being a certain configuration and motion of a sensorial fibre, it seems necessary that there should be a governing principle to give homogeneity and unity to the multiplicity of these configurations and motions, without which we should be unconscious of being the same under different impressions.

Though this principle may not be an immaterial particle, yet it may be a simple fluid of extreme and inconceivable subtlety. It may be diffused over the whole system, but accumu-



The restless longing after immortality, which seems a cheering sensation, peculiar to the breast

lated in the brain and the organs of sense, sympathetically imbibing all the pains and pleasures that vibrate on the sensorial fibres, and transferring to them an energetic power, to harmonize and individuate the infinity of their variations in figure and sensation.

As the matter of heat is very different from a body in combustion, though often confounded with it, so I suppose that the soul, or matter of consciousness, is very different from the fibres and organs of sense in a state of motion and sensation. In this matter of consciousness all the fibres and organs of sense may be immersed, or be intimately identified with it, by a communicating sympathy. A soul of this nature would not necessarily perish with the dissolution of the body, but might instantly vanish on it's extinction, with a velocity greater than that of any subtilised matter with which we are acquainted, to be united with other organic forms. By a law of divine attraction, infinitely stronger than any which chemistry exhibits, it might pass in a few moments of time into other regions in the immensity of space. The consciousness of it's past incorporation with the organic fibres of the human being would be carried with it, with all the association and ideas which the senses communicated to it in it's mortal state.

If the soul, or matter of consciousness, be neither an immaterial particle, nor a simple ethereal fluid, which, on it's extrication from this body, immediately associates with other intelligent forms in other states; if it be solely constituted of the sensorial fibres, it must certainly perish and be extinguished with those fibres. And though these very fibres may, in some future time, revive from their dust in other organic forms, we can have no hope that their former associations and motions will revive with them; and unless they do, there can, with respect to the individual, be no continuation of existence.

of man, is by no means *a proof* that such a state awaits us. For we are so organised, and placed

St. Paul, by drawing his similitude of the resurrection from the grain dying in the earth, and giving life to a more beautiful organization, seems to hint that this body envelops the principle of a higher and more perfect existence, which death is to unfold. This principle I understand to be that which I express by the matter of consciousness, which, while it remains in the body, may itself be rather inert and passive, *and merely a medium of giving individuality and unity to the different impressions of the organs of sense.* When extricated from the body it may display more vigorous and active energies. As some chemical gases which confined and concentrated in a dense medium are inactive, but which on the dissolution and decomposition of the body in which they are pent, expand with an elastic vigour, and display an astonishing velocity and force. They discover properties and affinities *of which no idea could be formed while they were in a state of inaction and fixation in other bodies.* May it not be much the same with the soul or matter of consciousness, may it not, as soon as the spirit of animation is extinguished, and the active power of the fibres is destroyed, immediately take it's flight from the body, with which there is no longer any force to keep it in conjunction, and pass into other forms of intelligent nature *to which it may be then attracted by irresistible affinities?*

The affinities of separate souls may *vary in proportion to their degrees of moral improvement*, for as they are to pass into other forms of being, and, in them, to identify their past existence, those forms of being into which they pass, will probably have different degrees of perfection, and capacities for happiness more or less exquisite, according to the different degrees of moral and intellectual perfection which they bring with them, and with which they were associated in the state which they have left.

in such circumstances, that we could not well pass through life, without this sentiment being excited in us. Hence the untutored savage usu-

The souls of those who have been besotted in brutal pleasures, who have cultivated no faculties of the mind or affections of the heart, and of those who have been the scourges of humanity, enemies to knowledge, to virtue, and to happiness, may be propelled by their peculiar affinities into states of being which have a tendency to generate pain and misery, and which, in the individual, may be increased by the consciousness of past misconduct, and the tormenting fire of guilty recollection. Chemical affinities are well known, but *moral affinities may not be chimerical*; indeed they seem rational and probable.

It is not to be supposed that intelligent nature ends in man and goes no farther. It is probable that the orders of intelligent beings are as infinite as the worlds in universal space; *and, as it is probable that there is a gradation between the orders, so it is probable, that the orders themselves are progressive in the scale of being.* In this world, man considered in the aggregate, is certainly progressive. However it may be with individuals, however particular minds may stagnate in improvement, or decline to decrepitude, *still the aggregated mass of mental power which resides in the world, is neither in a state of quiescence nor decay, but is continually accumulating accessions of strength, and advancing to higher degrees of glory.*

Individuals perish, but the species remains. Particular minds vanish, but the collective mind of nations cannot be affected by the enfeebling lassitude and consuming force of time. No more dark ages can arrive to eclipse, in a long night, the luminous powers of reason. The press has immortalized the energies of intelligence.

Mind, universally considered, is without any cessation or interruption, making continual approaches to perfection, which

ally feels it, in as much, if not more vigour than the civilised philosopher.

it can never attain; and is growing up to a maturity, at which, to all eternity, it can never arrive.

Subjects of speculation and experiment are infinite. The universe has no bounds, and, consequently, *man can never reach that point where he can make no fresh discoveries, or see things under no new relations.* The aggregate of mental power in the intelligent order of intelligent beings on a single planet, is *susceptible of eternal accumulation*, and we have strong reasons to suppose that an accumulation of the same sort will take place in all the planets and worlds that are spread through space. Thus the orders collectively pass from light to light, and glory to glory; though the individuals which compose them, and which help to augment the mass of intelligence, perish in their successive generations.

But, supposing an imperishable consciousness residing in each individual, and which, on the dissolution of its mortal integuments, immediately combines, according to particular affinities, with other forms of being, *we may imagine the individuals as progressive as the orders.* The units of intelligence which apparently die and are seen no more, may thus in fact be as long in life, and as progressive in improvement, as the congregated units of intelligence, which are perpetuated by reproduction. While however the genus of man is progressive on the same planet, individuals continue their progression in moral and intellectual excellence through the infinity of worlds.

The accumulation of knowledge in the aggregate, is in proportion to the accessions made by the different individuals who compose it. The mass of mankind is in ignorance and darkness; but that ignorance gradually yields to the enlightened labours of the few. The labours of the few not only diminish the ignorance itself, *but increase the number of those who labour to*

Those who are conscious of a present existence, and can observe, as all but idiots must, and with some emotions of concern, observe the mortality

*remove it*; and thus improvement goes on in a rapid progression, as the diminution of prejudice and ignorance is not only so much taken from the mass of prejudice and ignorance, but, by tending, at the same time, to augment the lists of the lovers of wisdom and the advocates for truth, it accelerates, with an increased force, the reduction of the quantity of prejudice and ignorance that remains. The state of rational intelligence into which the souls of individuals pass after death, may not be so much adjusted according to the degree of improvement in the world at the time in which they leave it; as according to their particular exertions made in the bodies with which they were identified, to forward that improvement, and to increase the aggregate of knowledge and of happiness. This idea is far from being discountenanced by the general expectancy of a future state on Christian principles; for christianity teaches us that in "heaven there are many mansions;" and we may suppose that these mansions will be appropriated to the different degrees of the moral and intellectual progress made by individuals in this probationary state.

There seems a connecting and sympathetic attraction between all the worlds through the infinity of space. This is evident in the relative agency of the sun, the moon, and the earth. The sun and moon not only exert a general influence on the whole globe, but probably a particular one on every individual on it. This influence, as it relates to individuals, is for the most part, invisible; but solar and lunar power perceptibly operate certain changes in the body, at certain periods, and in certain cases. In particular circumstances they palpably act upon the blood. At all times it is probable that they exert some benign and salutary influence on it; though, in particular circumstances, this influence is accumulated, and,



of their fellow-creatures, cannot fail of contemplating their own mortality;—conscious that they

*being greater than natural, causes and invigorates diseased motions.*

It is not improbable that *other systems and worlds may exert some degree of influence on our earth*; and though this influence may escape our senses, it may nevertheless operate, with an invisible force, to the production of much happiness or misery, *of many sensations and effects which we attribute to the influence of objects more in the vicinity of our bodies.* May not the immense systems that are spread through space all operate generally on our systems, and consequently partially on every planet in it? or, may not the solar centre more particularly attract this influence, and thence dispense it to the habitable globes that roll around it? Part, therefore, of that very influence\* which we attribute to the sun primarily, may only come from it secondarily, *as the medium of communicative sympathy between other systems and worlds, and our earth with the planets in it's vicinity*; and which turn, as it were, on the same magnificent solar axis. The theory of all the worlds and systems associated by a multitude of sympathetic influences, is by no means absurd, if we consider them, as I think that they should be considered, as parts of one immense whole. In this view, they must, like members of the same body, be necessarily connected by a variety of relations; and exercise upon each other an infinity of reciprocal influences; though these relations and influences may be invisible to our dim eyes, and as yet inscrutable to our gross faculties.

The mode by which this sympathy is carried on, may be by means of some fluid or ethereal power universally diffused, and

\* I have sometimes thought that the sun is only a vast focus of luminous particles, which are poured into it from ten thousand thousand other bodies, and which it may have the power of concentrating, and then of dispensing to it's satellites.

now are, it is, at the very first view, revolting to the mind, to imagine a period, when they shall

more subtilised than any which we can yet imagine even from the grandest notions of fluidity, which the genius of chemistry has hitherto been able to excite.

The influence which the sun and moon are known to exercise on our earth is called gravitation and attraction, *which are only names for an invisible and impalpable force, of which the essential nature is unknown*, though the effect be evident. It seems very probable that, besides this law of gravitation, which is supposed to be one of the great principles which holds the worlds in their station, *that there may be other laws or powers by which world is united with world, and system with system. The universe is a perfect whole. Nothing is disconnected in it.* The separate parts, though removed from each other at distances immense, and beyond calculation, are yet intimately united by some common medium, some bond of sympathy which holds them all together, as the limbs of the body are united by a communion of force, and a reciprocity of sensation. I cannot suppose any single part in the vast immeasurable universe to be *wholly independent of the rest*; but *the reciprocal dependencies and affinities between the separate units, may be minute and beyond calculation, though the whole sum taken together may be infinite.*

How there can be any reciprocity of influence between globe and globe at such immense distances is to us inconceivable; but distance is a relative term, and chiefly relative to the motival force and velocity of the body which has to pass it. If we had to travel a distance as great as from the earth to the sun, and could employ a force of velocity no greater than that at which we could move in a post-chaise, or on a saddle-horse, figures could hardly count the centuries that must elapse before we could reach the point of our destination. If we could employ the velocity of a cannon ball, we should arrive there sooner, and the distance, as relative to this velocity, would

not be. They are, therefore, naturally led, both by inclination and by hope, to contemplate death,

seem much less. But if we could employ the force of light, and communicate to our sluggish bodies the velocity of that fluid, the distance would appear trivial indeed.

No communicative and communicated influence, no sympathetic interaction can certainly take place between different points in the immensity of space, unless there be bodies whose velocity can overcome the obstructions which such immeasurable distances oppose to such a reciprocity of action. Till philosophy had, with an amazing accuracy, measured the velocity of light, the rapidity with which that body darts through space must have seemed chimerical. But we may suppose that there are other fluids and influences diffused through space, which have a velocity as much greater, or, in any indefinite degree, greater than light, as light has than a cannon ball. On this supposition no distance can impede the operation of the sympathies which bind the worlds.

It is probable that many happy discoveries and inventions will yet take place, which will give a still greater degree of artificial power to mankind, and *increase their natural power beyond what any artificial means have hitherto performed*. The human eye is weak and dim, the human arm is feeble and infirm, but discoveries and inventions have taken place which have by artificial expedients carried their separate powers to a degree, which, to use an hyperbolical term, borders on omnipotence. The telescope has communicated a portion of divine vigour to the eye, the lever to the arm; and other inventions have enabled mortals to discover powers in nature which were before invisible, or to manage those which were invincible. The magnetic needle has enabled man to defy the tempest, and bridle, if I may so say, the fury of the ocean. Conductors have disarmed the lightning of its terrors, the rod of Franklin has made the human hand reach to the clouds, and given it

not as an extinction of consciousness, but as a passage to another state of being.

a power that in past ages would either have enrolled the author among the gods, or caused him to have perished in the flames. The invention of gunpowder, though it has hitherto been chiefly employed for the devastation of mankind, has yet considerably expedited the labours of man in laying open to the sun the hidden treasures of the earth. The discovery of the power of steam has given an indefinite force to the mill and the forge, to all the contrivances and engines of art. It has imparted a degree of *artificial strength* to the human arm, by which it can with facility lift any weight, remove any pressure, or give mobility to any magnitude. The press is that engine, which, if it cannot raise the world from it's foundations, will, at least, finally raise the universal mass of human beings above the clouds of ignorance and error.

If such discoveries and inventions should continue to be multiplied, it is impossible to calculate how far the dwarfish physical powers of man may be extended by factitious powers, and the disclosure of attractions and influences in nature which are yet neither known nor thought of. But a very few pages of the book of nature are yet disclosed. The revolutions of time will unfold more and more; but the *whole, the mighty whole, can never be brought within the compass of human apprehension*. Page after page of the infinite volume will be developed; we shall see more to admire, more to praise, more to kindle the thirst for knowledge, to inflame the curiosity to know more still; but we can never reach that point when more is not to be known.

In viewing the operations of the Deity we are on all sides surrounded with infinity; an infinity of forms, of combinations, of magnitudes, of space, of time. Partial knowledge is all which we can acquire; but this knowledge is susceptible of such an accumulation, as may approach near to what, *in our*



The mind of every man, who can indulge the least thought on the subject, shrinks, with un-

*present limited notions*, would almost appear omniscience in knowledge, and omnipotence in power.

All the orders of intelligent beings in the universe may be employed in exploring the perfections of the supreme Being, as they are visible in material nature; and the individuals of those orders, who successively disappear in death, may be translated to other regions, to carry on the same enquiries under other modes and forms of being. What the orders learn may be accumulated and perpetuated among them; what the individuals know may be accumulated and perpetuated in their particular souls or principles of consciousness; and thus carried through the separate states of being into which they are to pass; and yet the aggregate knowledge of the whole, of infinite individuals and infinite orders, may, after a lapse of 10,000,000 years, amount only to a few fractions, compared to the infinite quantity that is to be acquired.

The final object of knowledge is, in my opinion, to give us more perfect notions of the supreme Being, and to make us more reciprocally useful to each other. The degree, in which we can be useful to our fellow-creatures, depends in a great measure on the degree according to which we can estimate rightly the powers of nature, and *according to the degree in which we know how the supreme Being adapts the train of causation to the end to be produced.*

The farther advances which we make to the source of all intelligence, to the Divinity himself, the more reason we shall have to admire his perfections, and to reverence his power. Admiration must generate, as far as human frailty will admit, the desire of imitation; and serious impressions of religious veneration must give life to a sentiment of universal love and charity.

The reflections in this note were written in the month of



speakable horror, from the idea of annihilation, —an eternal extinction of present consciousness. This feeling, which Addison calls the “longing after immortality,” if it be not innate, is, at least, a sensation that is always, sooner or later, excited by the mortality, to which we are subject, and of which we are often obliged to be the mournful spectators; and it seems a consoling ray, gleaming, though at an unmeasured distance, through the land of shadows.

Faint, however, and inconclusive are the best hopes of a future state, which are emitted from the light of reason. But, in proportion, as the intimations of such a state, from the analogies of nature, or the deductions of reason, are weak and unsatisfactory, so much the more probable is it, that the Almighty would vouchsafe to communicate to mankind such an important truth, by a particular revelation.

Such a revelation is, therefore, *a priori*, and reasoning on the attributes of benevolence, which

February 1797, and sent to Dr. Darwin of Derby, whose doctrine of ideas appears to me, for the most part, more clear, distinct, and satisfactory, than that of preceding metaphysicians; but I, by no means, think, that it establishes the system of materialism; and the truth of Christianity may be defended either on the material or the immaterial hypothesis.

we cannot help affigning to the Maker of all things, highly probable. And it is reasonable to suppose, that if the Almighty had not designed, from the beginning, such a revelation of a future state of being, he would have rendered the light of nature more conclusive on the subject.

When we sit down to examine the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus, with candour and seriousness, we can, by no means, dispute the possibility of it's truth, as some philosophers have done, *a priori*. For the fact must be rather confirmed than invalidated by such reasoning. Taking a comprehensive view of the moral world, we find that the credibility of an individual's rising from the dead, on purpose to convince mankind of a future state of existence, is, at first sight, confirmed by a thousand probabilities. But, when we come to find the fact itself supported by the most conclusive evidence—the evidence “*a priori*,” combined with a vast mass of “*posteriori*” evidence, amounts to a proof, little short of demonstrative, of the truth of the thing itself.

No “*priori*” evidence can, of itself, either prove or disprove the truth of any miracle; of which the reality must depend on the truth of the fact; and not on the presumptions which the wisest among beings, whose views are so limited as those

of man, can form against it, from previous considerations on the general course or laws of nature.

We know but little of the general laws which regulate the course of the natural world; and we know still less of those moral laws which regard the conduct of intelligent beings, and the relations which may exist between them and the maker of all things.

Some individuals, intoxicated with the fumes of a false philosophy, will deny the *present* interference of God in the government of the world, and the welfare of mankind; but I do not see how we can allow that God made the world, without, at the same time, agreeing that he superintends it. Prescience does not exclude providence\*. A moral government is not incompatible with general laws; for if we allow that those laws were originally fixed by a moral governor, we must allow that they were, *from the beginning, adapted to moral purposes*. Those parts, therefore, in the moral system, which appear to

\* Prescience is here used as signifying fore-knowledge; Providence, as respecting the active presence of God, in the government of the world, disposing all things on the wisest plan, and making the different dispensations of good and evil subservient to purposes of benevolence.

as deviations from what we call the general laws of nature and ways of Providence, may be, in fact, only a part of them, though the light is too dim to see their connexion. These thoughts easily reconcile the notion of prescience, and of an over-ruling Providence; for they are, in fact, the same thing; and the most subtle reasoners will find it difficult to prove the contrary.

The comets are, certainly, as regular in their apparently eccentric orbits and devious course, as the planets are in their more central rotations; but the regularity of the latter is more perceptible; and the regularity of the former would be equally so, if we were not quite so short-sighted, and could trace them more distinctly through the maze of their motions in illimitable space.

This may serve to illustrate the idea of the natural and moral order of the world. The former appears more regular and uniform, because it is placed, as it were, more in the region of our senses;—the last is equally regular; but as we are less acquainted with its *whole sphere of action*, and can only observe a few of its minute and detached parts, it appears, to our weak sight, a scene of chaos and confusion.

The Christian miracles, which are apparently irreconcilable with the general laws which pre-

vail in the natural world, may be necessary links in the infinite chain of the moral system. They were ordained by prescience, from the beginning; and they were accomplished by providence, at the appointed time.

The assertion of Mr. Hume, that the Christian miracles must be necessarily false, because they are devious from the general laws of nature, is one of the most arrogant, not to say, impious assertions that was ever made. For Mr. Hume presumes to pronounce on the universality of the laws of nature, to define the cases to which their application is limited, and the line beyond which they have no agency.

Vain man, whose whole existence is but a speck of time, canst thou measure the heights and depths of the divine prescience? Canst thou prescribe the barrier which infinite wisdom cannot pass?

The assertion of Mr. Hume, that it is more probable that testimony should be false than that miracles should be true, is a remark which is more specious than solid. For, in some cases, the knowledge of the human mind, of the natural affections and of the ordinary motives of human action will justify us in adopting the converse of the proposition.



In the case of the Christian miracles, I think that a comprehensive view of the principles of human nature will bear us out in the assertion, that it is more probable that the miracles themselves should be true, than that the testimony which was given in their defence, by the apostles and first Christians, should be false.

Omitting the consideration of the other Christian miracles, I shall wholly confine myself to that particular miracle of the resurrection of Jesus, on which the truth of Christianity rests, as on a base of adamant,

In combating the great authority of Mr. Hume, I shall begin with stating this proposition,—that “the resurrection of Jesus is more likely to have been true, than the testimony which maintained it to have been false;” and this I hope to prove, to the satisfaction of the reader.

The fact itself, as I have before remarked, is rather confirmed than invalidated by considerations “*a priori*.” It is a fact, entirely consonant to the best notions, which the most enlarged reason can form of the divine wisdom and goodness. It is a fact, which it was worthy the supreme disposer to establish, in order to determine the inconclusive reasonings, and to fix the wavering hopes of man about a future state. It is a fact,

which, if it seem derogatory to the natural order of events, and to the general course of nature, was yet essentially requisite to harmonise the chaotic confusion that otherwise prevails in the moral world.

If God be a moral governor, we must suppose that he has placed eternal and immutable distinctions between virtue and vice, cruelty and benevolence; but as we do not observe such distinctions here, as we do not behold happiness invariably associated with virtue, or misery with vice, we thence infer the probability that the Almighty would vouchsafe to his creatures some consolatory intelligence of another life after death, in which the irregularities of the present scheme of things will be corrected.

The knowledge of a future life is likewise absolutely necessary to fix moral truth on a strong foundation; and to strengthen moral obligations, by an eternal necessity and importance. For, supposing there to be no future life, morality has no other sanctions than what temporary expedients, or than what the convenience or the caprice of individuals may bestow. Men are let loose at once, from all restraints, but those few which civil society imposes, and which can never reach that depravity which lurks in the hidden chambers of the heart. It is nothing but the con-

violation of a future life, and of a day of recompence after death, which *can operate to the prevention of secret crimes*;—crimes which may be committed with civil impunity, and without any dread of temporal shame.—It is this conviction alone which can purify the bosom from a base and narrow selfishness, and open the heart to the pleasures of a disinterested benevolence.

Where men have not the least hope or expectation of a life after death, self, and self only will be their idol; they will not heed those moral relations, in the midst of which, man is placed; and for the contempt of which he is accountable. They will scoff at those benevolent sympathies which tend to approximate the interests of individuals to those of their fellow-creatures.

He who looks to the grave, as the scene of endless annihilation, as the last limits of human destiny, will necessarily feel a cold aversion to every generous act of self-denial, and to every great exertion in the cause of suffering humanity. Far different will it be with him, who, beholding the glorious light of eternity, shining beyond the "valley of the shadow of death," connects the influence of his present conduct with his future condition; and associates an immortal interest with a scrupulous regard to the observance of justice, and the practice of benevolence.

Of such importance is the belief of a continuation of existence beyond the grave! Some satisfactory information, on a subject of such infinite concern, it was certainly worthy the Governor of the world to communicate; and it is so far probable, from previous considerations, that the case of the resurrection of Jesus, to which Christians appeal, as the medium of this communication, is not a vain fable but a certain fact.

It now remains for us to consider, whether the resurrection of Jesus be supported by probable and competent testimony.

In the first place, it is more natural and easy, from the influence of the principle of association, to speak truth \* than falsehood; and, perhaps, in

\* Children possess naturally a love for truth and an aversion to falsehood. Were the first universally and judiciously encouraged, it would never be vanquished by the second; which, by bad management, is often changed from an aversion into an affection.

When parents punish their children for telling the truth, they cause them, in future, to take an interest in falsehood. Their natural antipathy to the latter vanishes; and, as they grow up, they learn to associate it with the pleasures of self-interest. Parents cannot too soon instil into their children this sound maxim of true philosophy and genuine Christianity,—that there is an intimate connexion between falsehood and misery.

If, on any occasion, you punish your child, when he ingenuously confesses the truth, you will, afterwards, cause him



the most profligate liars, the number of their affirmations which are true, or which they conscientiously believe so, greatly exceeds those which are false, or which they wilfully pronounce with a consciousness of their untruth.

Truth to be spoken, and to be spoken with consistency, requires no pains; but falsehood, by counteracting the natural sentiments, and by being counteracted by those numerous associations of ideas, which serve as preservatives to veracity, cannot be maintained, with any steadiness, without *extraordinary exertions*.

Men are never impostors and liars *without a*

to hesitate about confessing it; till, at last, perhaps, he will flatly deny it, or boldly persist in a false assertion.

How soon does a passion for discovering the true relations of things, which is, in fact, no other than a passion for truth, disclose itself in children! What is called infantine curiosity, is a species of this passion. It originates from a desire to behold things in their just and real, not their seeming, relations; and is mingled with an aversion to be misled by appearances.

You, perhaps, give your child a watch, or some other toy; and you almost immediately find a desire excited to behold the inside and to discover the true relation between that and the outside appearance.

The principle of the love of truth in children is seen even in their credulity. Conscious of their own sincerity, they are but too apt to think others equally sincere, till sad experience teaches them that fraud and dissimulation are the two prevailing characteristics of mankind!!!



*motive*; and, as there always is, in every individual, from causes which attach to his organization, a desire to speak the truth, *that motive* must be stronger than the bias of nature and association, which inclines him to truth and sincerity\*.

The primary and most important question, which arises in considering the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, is this; supposing the fact a scandalous imposture, what motive could the apostles have had, sufficient to counteract their natural love of truth; and to make them attempt to palm upon the world an unfounded falsehood?

Happiness, or agreeable sensation, either in possession or reversion, is the common incitement to human action. Now, what interest could the apostles have had, in this assertion, that "Jesus was risen from the grave?"—an assertion which involved them in an unexampled series of persecutions and sufferings?

In the time of the Apostles, the love of life was

\* The doctrine of counteracting motives, has never yet been sufficiently considered or elucidated. Could we ascertain the force of opposing motives, which are, as opposing powers at the two ends of a beam, with an accuracy approaching to algebraic precision, we might then reduce the competency or the incompetency, the truth or falsehood of testimony to mathematical certainty.

as strong a principle of action as it is at present. The love of life is perhaps the strongest principle in our nature. It is that which commences with the first beat of the heart and continues to it's last. Associated with the love of life is the desire of enjoying it, or, in other words, of agreeable sensation. The combination of 'these two powers energises the principle of self-interest.

This principle of self-interest is never totally extinguished in the human breast. It is often, as it were, dormant; but is never dead. It is a fire, which is sometime seen beaming benignly, at others burning destructively; and fuel is never wanting in the heart to keep it in a state either of slow and gentle, or of furious and violent combustion.

It is to the principle of self-interest, that the motives of human action may always be traced; though, in some actions, we are obliged to ascend to the parent source by a much more circuitous rout than in others. Self-interest is a fountain, from which flow a variety of streams, meandering in a thousand directions.—Thus, it operates differently in different individuals; some pursue a real and palpable, others a probable and apparent interest; some a present, others a future and distant interest.

The great difference, therefore, between good and bad men is, that the latter act solely with a view to a present, the former more with a view to a future interest and reward. While the one pursues happiness through the medium of sensuality, the other pursues it through the medium of benevolence, or of agreeable sensation, moral and refined.

That the Apostles had no *present interest* in view when they affirmed, at the hazard of life and all its enjoyments, that Jesus was risen from the dead, cannot be denied. Their motives must, therefore, be referred to a future interest,—an interest which they were not to taste till after death. Now the only probable ground on which this expectation could be raised, was the conviction of this truth, that Jesus was risen from the dead; and this conviction must have been strong and well-grounded indeed, when it could enable them to subdue those propensities of sense, which urge men to worldly pleasures; and when it could cause the hope of a future and invisible joy to absorb the energetic passion of the love of life, which so wonderfully strengthens the power of a present self-interest.

Were the Apostles and first Christians so totally different in their nature from other men, that they acted not from the love of pleasure but of pain,

not of happiness but of misery? Did they seek these things for their own sakes?—for allowing the resurrection to have been their own fiction, we can assign no other motives whatever to their conduct; but if we allow the fact, we shall then find an easy and simple solution of their behaviour; and it admits of an explanation from the known principles of human nature,—*principles, from which man never deviates, any more than the planets from their orbits.* The Apostles did not pursue pain and suffering for their own sakes; agreeable sensation was as much the object of their exertions as it is of human activity in general; but, in order to obtain it, they voluntarily encountered a long and dreary state of *intermediate affliction.* They clearly saw that much present misery lay before them, but that glory and immortality awaited them, at the end of their labours. Their conduct, therefore, was regulated more by a future than a present self-interest; by agreeable sensation after death rather than before it.

Allowing the conduct of the Apostles and first Christians to have been such, as sacred and profane history concur to represent it,—and, moreover, allowing the general principles and ruling motives of human action to have been the same then, that they are at present,—the truth of the resurrection of Jesus becomes established by proofs

which do not come far short of demonstrative certainty.

The degree of assent which we give to testimony ought, certainly, to be proportioned to the credibility of the witnesses, and to their compatibility. The credit due to the witnesses for any fact is according to their character for veracity, and to the means they had of knowing the truths they assert. I do not see how the credibility of the witnesses of the resurrection can be impeached, either by their want of integrity, or common sense, or competent information.

In asserting such a fact, they could not, as we have seen, have been biased by any base motives of self-interest; for self-interest inclined the other way; and we cannot, for a moment, imagine that they themselves were deceived, or that their senses were imposed on.

The death of Jesus, on the cross, was a subject of public notoriety. Of this the Apostles had palpable demonstration; and they had proof, equally demonstrative, of his resurrection. And they were not disposed to assent to such a fact, without such evidence as was fully satisfactory, and which could not be disputed.

Credulity, which has rendered so many the



dupes of imposture, was far from being a trait in the character of the Apostles. Instead of inclining to a facility of belief, *they were rather disposed to indulge doubts and to entertain cavils.* The most astonishing miracles could *hardly conquer their belief.* "O fools," said Jesus, "and slow of heart to believe!" Luke xxiv. 25.

Though Jesus had repeatedly declared to his disciples, that he should rise again from the grave\*, yet these declarations made but little impression on them. After his crucifixion, they seem to have mourned and wept, as for one, whom they should see no more! Mark xvi. 10. And even after that they had been told, by Mary Magdalene, that Jesus was risen; St. Mark informs us, that *they believed not*; and St. Luke xxiv. 11. says, that *her words seemed to them as idle tales.*

Thus we see that the Apostles were, by no means, disposed to believe, that Jesus was risen from the grave, *without sufficient evidence.* They were too incredulous to have been made the dupes of imposture, even if any had been attempted. But Jesus gave the Apostles the most convincing proofs that his resurrection was neither a deceitful fabrication nor an ideal supposition—"Behold,"

\* Vid. Matt. xx. 19. xxvi. 32.

said he to them, Luke xxiv. "my hands and my feet, that it is I, myself; handle me and see me." He did not appear to them in a vision of the night, when the vigilant and scrutinising powers of man are suspended; and the imagination, liberated from all restraint, is abandoned to the illusions of an ideal world. He did not appear *to one individual only*, in a state of solitude; when his terrors might have overpowered his judgment. But he appeared to the eleven disciples, as they were assembled together; and offered himself to be handled and seen; that they might be assured, that he was not a mere phantom, conjured up by their own imagination. On this occasion, St. Luke xxiv. 41. tells us, that at first "*they believed not for joy.*" How natural and how lively is this representation of the Evangelists! The events which we ardently desire, and yet but little expect, we can hardly bring ourselves to believe, when they come to pass. The fulness of our joy almost inclines us to doubt our own senses, and to distrust the reality of our good fortune.

That the impression, made on the minds of the Apostles, might not be obliterated, and that every doubt which they could possibly entertain of the truth of his resurrection might be dissipated, Jesus appeared to them at several other times;—once when he convinced Thomas, who was not present at his first appearance, John xx. again,

John xxi. he shewed himself to the disciples, at the sea of Tiberias; when he conversed and eat and drank with them; and again, in Bethany, when he ascended into heaven, in the presence of five hundred of the brethren; of whom many were living when St. Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians.

Thus we see that the resurrection of Jesus was confirmed by indisputable testimony, by witnesses, *not in the least credulous or biassed, and who refused to admit it's truth till they could no longer doubt it.*

The bold and *disinterested* declarations of the truth of the resurrection, which the Apostles made in the presence of those by whom Jesus had been crucified, and soon after that event, deserve particular attention.

St. Peter, in a speech which he delivered on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. resolutely and undoubtingly affirms the truth of the resurrection; and this he does, in defiance of that infamous lie, which the Jewish rulers had propagated, That the disciples had stolen the body. The Apostle then tells them, "That God had raised up that Jesus whom they, by wicked hands, had crucified and slain." Observe what a solemn conviction of this important truth, must have influenced the

Apostle at this moment, and how fearless this conviction made him! For, *the mere assertion of the fact, at such a time*, was a charge of atrocious murder and of shameless falsehood, against the whole Jewish government; who had first put Jesus to death, and then fabricated a lie, to conceal the truth of his resurrection. Was it probable, then, that any one of the Apostles \* would thus have dared to criminate those, who had so lately nailed their master to the cross, if they had not been assured, by irrefragable proofs, that Jesus had triumphed over the grave, and opened to them a way from temporal pains to immortal happiness?—When the Apostles had miraculously healed a man, who had been a cripple from his birth, St. Peter told the admiring Jews, that they had not performed this cure through their own power, or holiness; but “through faith in the name of the Prince of life, whom God had raised up, of which they were witnesses.” Acts iii. 15.—In Acts iv. we read, that the Apostles were apprehended for having preached, through Jesus, the resurrection from the dead: and being carried before the great council, they were required to tell, by what means they had made the impotent

\* Consider the pusillanimity of the Apostles, *before the resurrection* (when they all forsook their master, and one positively denied him), and compare it with their open avowal of him, *after his resurrection*,—an avowal which no menace nor persecution could, *for a moment*, induce them to retract.

man whole. Not in the least dismayed, they boldly declared, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand before you whole. Neither is there salvation in any other," &c. This is the undaunted language of conscious truth. When the Apostles were dismissed from the council, they were peremptorily ordered, neither to preach nor teach any more in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John, unmoved by the menace, answered, that "they could not but speak the things *which they had seen and heard.*"

Another illustrious witness of the resurrection is St. Paul. To suppose that St. Paul, a man of strong natural sagacity, versed in all the learning of the Jews, animated with the zeal of the Pharisees, and burning with rage against the Christians, should, *in a moment*, and *without any cause adequate to a divine influence*, become the strenuous and indefatigable advocate of that religion which he had so bitterly persecuted;—to suppose that he should, *in an instant*, renounce all those notions in which he had been brought up, and the prejudices of the sect, to which he had been so warmly attached, is utterly incredible, and contrary to the well-known principles of human nature, and motives of human conduct.



His sudden and extraordinary conversion, can only be accounted for by allowing the truth of that miraculous interposition of divine power, which is recorded by St. Luke, and which is corroborated by the voluntary testimony of St. Paul himself. The Apostle of the Gentiles was convinced that the tale of the Jewish rulers was an artful endeavour, to suppress the glorious truth of the resurrection; for he saw and conversed with that Jesus whom they had crucified.

But it may be said, that, allowing the Apostles to have been, in every respect, credible and competent witnesses; we cannot be assured that their testimony, as recorded in the Gospels and Acts, &c. is that which they delivered to the world. It may be alledged that the validity of testimony decreases, in proportion to the distance from the time when it was first delivered, or that the probability of it's truth is inversely as it's distance. This objection, though it possesses some weight, yet will be found not to have much, in the case of that testimony, which the Apostles and first Christians gave to the truth of the resurrection.

The authority of testimony is, by no means, diminished by the lapse of time, unless it can be proved, that it has been either mutilated or corrupted in it's descent. If this cannot be proved, it's authority remains, at the end of a thousand

years, as strong, and essentially as convincing as it was at the beginning.

When we consider, therefore, the evidence, by which the truth of the resurrection is established, we ought to inquire whether there be any proof of it's having been altered in it's descent from it's original source?

Of the writers, whose written testimony, in favour of the resurrection, has come down to us, we have not the least grounds for presuming that the relation has experienced any material change or depravation, in it's transmission through so many centuries.

The sacred books were preserved with scrupulous fidelity; and the dissensions, that begun to prevail in the Christian church, even in the age of the Apostles, greatly contributed to maintain the purity and integrity of the text, in all points of consequence. Had the Christian church continued, from it's first beginning to the present time, undisturbed by the jealousies of schism, or the commotions of faction, the charge, That the text of the sacred books had been, at different periods, mutilated and perverted, to suit the interested views of priestly artifice, might have been urged by the skeptic with more force and plausibility; and could not so readily have been

refuted. But, *fortunately*, Divine Providence so ordered it, *that differences of opinion should prevail in the church from it's earliest periods*; and these differences have not only prevented the religious principle from sinking into a fatal languor, but have eminently contributed to preserve, pure and inviolate from profane hands, the text of the sacred writers. For, had one party attempted to alter the books of the Evangelists, to suit their private views, and to give a preponderance of authority to their favourite opinions, their attempts would instantly have been exposed by the adverse faction; the cry of sacrilege would have been raised, which would have brought shame and derision on those, whose audacity had perpetrated such an outrage on the holy volume.

In the various dissensions, about forms of faith and points of doctrine, which have taken place in the Christian church, and which certainly have not been characterised by liberality, or softened by mildness, all parties *appealed to the same authority*,—the records of the Apostles and Evangelists; and seem to have combined, notwithstanding their mutual animosities, to preserve them pure and incorrupt.

When the dissensions of the Christian church had settled into that dead and fatal calm, which, under the benumbing influence of an intolerant

superstition, overspread the Western hemisphere, then, indeed, a fair opportunity presented itself, to mar the sacred text, to suit the purposes of priestcraft, and to glut the rapacity of Papal ambition.

But no such attempt was made; and if it had been made, it must have miscarried; first, from the ignorance, which prevailed among the clergy, of the original language in which the gospels were written; and, next, because, if the manuscripts of the Western church had been surreptitiously mutilated and interpolated, the genuine text would still have survived in those of the Eastern or Greek church.

That no corruptions have found their way into the New Testament, which can, in the least, shake the fundamental stability of the Christian religion, we may learn from this, that, of all the various readings\*, which the diligence of critics has hitherto discovered, there are none which, in the least, tend to invalidate the truth of any fact of importance. Amid an almost incredible multitude of minute and unimportant variations, all the manuscripts of the Evangelists which have hitherto been collated, *harmonize in recording the*

\* The various readings, in Mills's edition of the New Testament, have been computed to amount to thirty thousand.

*facts, which are most material to the cause of revelation.* There are verbal differences; there are omissions, and there are corruptions of little moment; but when we give to these, their individual and their collective weight; they will be found rather to add to, than to deduct from the consistency and the authority of the Evangelical testimony.

That the Evangelic records themselves were written in the age to which they are ascribed, is sufficiently clear from contemporary history; and it is equally clear, that the validity of their attestation to the truth of the miracles and of the resurrection of Jesus, remains the same, at this day, as it was on the first publication to the world. Distance of time has not therefore by any means impaired the consentient force of the apostolic testimony to the truth of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; because the testimony, in favour of this fact, which was given immediately after the event, has remained unchanged ever since.

But it may be urged, that, allowing, in all its extent, the sincerity and the credibility of the testimony, the resurrection of a dead man to life, being contrary to the general laws of nature, and to all the accumulated observations of the great mass of mankind on the operations of those laws,



must be necessarily false, and what no testimony can prove true. But I must observe, that we know little of the generality or permanency of the laws of nature themselves, but from the testimony of past generations. When we predicate their universality, *we, in fact, assume the truth of testimony.*

It is from testimony only, that we know that there has been, for the last two or three thousand years, a regular succession of seasons, that the sea has experienced a flux and reflux, that the air has been disturbed by tempests, or that the moon has, at certain regular periods, waned and increased, appeared and disappeared.

These are laws of nature; but, of their universality, of the regularity, and, as it were, continuity of their operations, in time past, we really know no more, than those have told us who have gone before us; and whom we may number back for many ages, till we arrive at the confines of an impenetrable obscurity. Did we not give some credit to testimony, we should, at last, believe nothing but what came within the cognizance of our senses.

It is only from testimony, we know that this earth has been inhabited, by man, for five or six thousand years. It is only from testimony, we

know that this world has, during that period, been cheered by the influence of the sun, or that the heavens have been illumined with stars.

The philosopher may say, that, observing with his own eyes the great regularity which, at present, exists in the motions of the heavenly bodies, and the great uniformity which is visible, in what are called the laws of nature, he is convinced that their regularity and uniformity have always been the same. But whence can the philosopher, who will give no credit to testimony, believe, that with which none of his senses have made him acquainted; and for which he can bring no other proof, than the proof of testimony; to which, he pretends that he ought not to assent? His belief of the universality and uniformity of the laws of nature, must depend on the credit which he gives to the testimony of others, confirmed by the researches of his own reason into the natural order of things, at present existing in the world.

Now, does Christianity demand belief on less substantial grounds? No;—it requires nothing more than an assent to the truth of the testimony,—not against reason;—but on rational principles, and from serious inquiry. Christianity, by no means, requires an acquiescence in the truth of the testimony, by which it is established, without

*a previous examination* into it's validity and it's credibility. It calls for such examination first, and for such acquiescence afterwards: and I feel a firm persuasion, that, if the most acute philosophers would but investigate the truth of Christianity, with that seriousness and candour, which they themselves would be the first to recommend in other subjects of investigation, they would be as strongly convinced that Jesus rose from the dead, as they are that the earth has experienced, for the last two thousand years, regular vicissitudes of summer and winter, or that the moon has been subject to periodical revolutions. The philosopher may say, that he does not disbelieve such things, because he observes the course of nature to be the same at present, and that, therefore, in these cases, his assent to past testimony is confirmed by present observation;—but, that when testimony requires him to assent to the truth of a dead man's having risen again to life, he cannot subscribe to it, because it is contrary to present experience, and because all the observations which he can make on the irresistible mortality of the human species, and on the immutability of the laws of nature, contradict it's probability; and are arguments against it's truth, which no testimony can establish.

It must be allowed, nevertheless, that we know nothing of the identity between the present and the former course of nature but from the truth of

testimony. It is from testimony we learn that there was, in former ages, the same regularity and uniformity in the natural world, and the same instability, and, as it were, fragility in the moral, that there is at present.

The most skeptical must allow, that, at least, a considerable part of human knowledge is founded on human testimony. And though there may, in particular parts of such knowledge, as is derived from testimony, be an intermixture of falsehood, *the great mass of it is truth.*

From the influence of association, and from the greater natural facility of speaking truth than falsehood, truth acquires a power over the heart that may easily be diminished, but is seldom, if ever, entirely extinguished.

Hence, the combinations of falsehood are usually the means of their own detection. Such is the secret and invisible power of truth, that it is difficult indeed for any individual to be consistent in a lie;—I mean such a lie as involves a multiplicity of events, an intricate detail of great and minute circumstances;—but for many individuals to persevere in such a fabrication, without such glaring incoherencies and inconsistencies, as should be their own refutation, is next to impossible.

Falsehood, by being always associated, at least, with some degree of aversion, requires a greater effort of the mind than truth; the latter, according with the natural feelings of rectitude, and connected with agreeable sensation, flows, as it were, from the heart with ease and promptitude; while the former counteracted, in almost every step of it's progress, by the natural sentiments, the affections and the associations of the mind, has to encounter obstacles, that are not readily subdued. Thus we see that nature has provided for the defence of truth, and particularly the truth of testimony, by opposing so many difficulties to consistency in falsehood.

Carrying the foregoing observations in his mind, let the most skeptical sit down to examine, with seriousness and candour, the truth of that testimony, by which the fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is substantiated. Let him carefully weigh the nature of the testimony, it's multiplicity, it's variety, it's consistency; and then let him compare it with the circumstances of the witnesses.

Let the skeptic consider, amid a multitude of minute and unimportant variations, and which are rather a proof of undesigned integrity, than of designing forgery, what a perfect consistency and harmony there is in the whole mass of the testi-



mony, and what an air of candour, of truth and simplicity pervades the whole narrative of the fact, in the Four Evangelists. There are no marks of that disguise, that duplicity, that embarrassment, which are almost necessarily attached to falsehood. The relations of the Evangelists possess those inimitable features of an easy, unassuming confidence, which are characteristic of artless veracity.

The skeptic should, likewise, contrast the circumstances of the witnesses with the testimony, which they delivered. Did their testimony tend to improve their circumstances? Certainly not. It involved them in indigence and misery; but this indigence and misery they voluntarily endured, *rather than keep back the testimony.*

Men never act without motives. The motive that could urge the Apostles to persist in such a gross and palpable falsehood, as the resurrection of Jesus to life (supposing it to be a lie of their own invention), must have been strong indeed, to overcome their natural love of truth, and to sear their hearts against those sensations of remorse and shame, which, at least, in some degree, are the invariable associates of imposition and of falsehood.

But, in the case we are considering, what

motive could there have been powerful enough to operate this effect? The prospect of some great temporal advantage has often induced men to maintain, with resolute effrontery, and, at every hazard, some artful scheme, of interested imposture; but there never yet was an instance, in which men have persevered in such a scheme, for the sake of pure, unalloyed and hopeless misery. And yet we place the Apostles in these very circumstances; we make misery inconsolable, and wretchedness unqualified, the object of their wishes, and the end of their exertions, if we suppose the resurrection of Jesus to be nothing more than a cunningly devised fable, of their own invention.

Supposing the truth of Christianity a fiction, it is absolutely impossible, that the conduct of the Apostles should have been such as sacred and profane history concur to represent it; and as the circumstances of the world, at that time, combine to prove that it must have been. It is full as improbable, that twelve men, in their senses, should persist in a lie, for the sole sake of exchanging comfort for anguish, and happiness for misery, as that a dead man should rise to life. The former is as great a deviation from those moral laws, which influence the course of human actions, as the latter is from those natural laws, which cause the mortality of the human species.

If the philosopher will not allow the truth of one miracle, he must, at least, allow the truth of what is quite as miraculous, full as improbable, and quite as irreconcilable to the ordinary course of events.

The conduct of the Apostles, not to mention others, who were all men of sound judgment, good common sense, and plain, unsophisticated understandings, cannot possibly be reconciled to any experience of human nature, or to any knowledge of human motives,—without allowing the truth of the Christian miracles, and particularly that fundamental miracle, the adamant base of the Christian doctrine,—the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Can any philosopher allow that the general principles of human nature, and the general incitements to human action, were the same in the days of the Apostles, that they are at present, without allowing the sincerity and integrity of their testimony, and the consequent truth of the facts which it records? Can any philosopher, who is capable of calm and dispassionate reflection, for a moment imagine that so many individuals, all capable of feeling pain and pleasure, and distinguishing their differences, should, without a single interested motive, either of pleasure, fame or fortune, voluntarily engage in a long and heart-

rending scene of complicated agonies, for no other purpose, than to vindicate assertions which they knew to be false?

In every view, which I can take of the subject, it appears to me that the converse of Mr. Hume's proposition, is that, which in this instance, we ought to embrace; and that "it is far more probable that the resurrection of Jesus should be true, than that the accumulated testimony in it's favour should be false."—The Philosopher, who obstinately perseveres in denying a miracle, which is so well attested, only because it appears to his dim perceptions and limited capacity, contrary to the usual course of nature, seems, in some degree, to resemble a person, who should refuse to believe, that other countries were subject to the concussion of earthquakes and the desolation of volcanos, because he had never observed them in his own; and therefore might suppose such phenomena, contrary to what his narrow observation might induce him to think the ordinary course of nature.

The obstinate aversion to believe in a miracle, so well attested as that of Christ's resurrection, would vanish, if the unbeliever would consider—that the world has moral as well as natural laws, and, that the resurrection of a dead man to life, though it may seem contrary to the latter, might,

in the particular instance which is alledged, have been highly agreeable to the former; and he should besides consider—that a serious and comprehensive inquiry into the system of nature and the ways of providence, would probably prove natural and moral laws to be essentially the same, and to harmonize exactly in all their operations; and that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, though apparently anomalous to the first, might, at the time, and in the circumstances, in which it took place, have been analogous to both.

Allowing the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, the practical inferences, that are to be derived from it, must be obvious to every one.—The question about the nature of the sentient principle, whether it be formed of perishable or imperishable materials, whether it be a combination of gross matter, or a spark of ethereal fire, whether it survive the body or mingle with it's dust, is of little importance; when we know that “Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Vid. 1 Cor. xv.

The belief of a future state of existence, is absolutely necessary to strengthen the power of self-denial; to incite to the practice of disinterested



virtue, and to refine benevolence from the pollutions of selfishness \*. I agree with Mr. Godwin, that men may be brought to act from disinterested motives, and that their general conduct may be regulated on a system of pure benevolence, but I deny that the principle which he assumes can ever produce this effect; nor can any principle whatever, whose operations are limited within the horizon of this life, and have no relation to a state beyond it.

The only possible way, in which to make men act from motives of pure benevolence, (as far as it respects personal considerations or worldly interest,) is by teaching them, universally to connect the idea of benevolence, and of every tender

\* Christianity does not propose *entirely to extinguish* the principle of self-interest, but to alter its direction, and by urging us to forego a less or temporal self-interest, which reposes with the dust of man in the grave, to aspire after an interest ample as eternity. For this purpose, it constantly places before our eyes the crown of glory that fadeth not away;—it points to a state of happiness beyond to the grave, exempt from corruption and decay; and teaches us to consider the temple of charity as the only way by which it is to be approached.

“Lay not,” said Jesus with his characteristic simplicity of manner, “up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” Vid. Matt. vi.

exertion of human kindness, with the hope, not of a present, but of a future and eternal recompense, with an interest greater than any which this world contains. To effect this, the belief of a future existence becomes an *essential requisite*; and this belief ought to be so impressed, as that the strength of it's conviction should, in a great measure, absorb every low, vain and sensual consideration.

Mankind cannot possibly be induced, by any the most specious argument, or theory, *which is relative to this life only*, to omit, in their dealings and intercourse with their fellow-creatures, the fond and captivating calculatings of present interest, and to practise a pure benevolence;—a benevolence not prompted by temporal motives,—while they think this world the limits of their existence, the everlasting boundary of all their perceptions, their affections, their hopes and fears. But it is far different, when they look on this earth as the mere infancy of their being, and as a passage to another; where their happiness shall be proportioned to the degree in which they have cherished and have exercised the benevolent affections.

It may be said, that pleasurable sensation being the constant motive to, or object of human action, pure disinterestedness is unattainable by

man. But let it be considered, that the belief of a future state does not tend so much to destroy the principle of self-interest, as to refine it from all it's base and polluted elements, and to sublime it into a pure and unalloyed disinterestedness, as far as any human and worldly recompense is concerned.

It must likewise be considered, that in the breast of the Christian, pleasurable sensation, ceasing to be a motive to selfishness, will be changed into the strongest motive to pure benevolence; for, the farther advances which the Christian makes in true holiness, the more he will esteem the joys of immortality, though at a distance, a source of purer happiness than any interest or possession on this side the grave.

Who has not felt, and been cheered by the kind solace of hope? Hope is an oblivion of misery, and a fore-taste of happiness. She gilds life in it's darkest moments; and makes the heart sensible to the touch of joy, even in the severest agonies. Were it not for this kind and seldom-failing visitor to the breasts of the wretched, mankind would sink into languor under the least affliction. It is hope, which gives energy to fortitude. It is hope, which keeps so many thousands of human sufferers light and buoyant above the waves of adversity. It is hope, whose benign

and heavenly smile, administers cordial comfort to the prisoner in his cell, and the captive in his chains.—But to whom is hope so kind and constant a comforter as to the Christian? To whom does she impart such sweet or such lasting consolations? In other breasts, hope alternately lives and dies; but, in the breast of the Christian, she shines with immortal beams; and, instead of forsaking him in his last moments, she hails his closing eyes to the sight of “the everlasting hills;” and offers to his grasp “the crown that fadeth not away.”

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A PICTURE OF  
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

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*A few thoughts on the free discussion of the truths of  
revelation.*

No man's conviction, as far as it is rational, can be greater than the degree of his knowledge. Those who think otherwise, are only blind to their ignorance; and their presumption is folly. They are apt to be hardened in error, and to oppose a mere *ipse dixit* to the plainest arguments.

A man's faith in revelation, and of course his obedience to it's precepts, is usually according to his conviction of it's truth. But the truth of revelation, not being perceptible to the organs of sense, or capable of a palpable demonstration,



can only be ascertained by diligent investigation. Such investigation of revealed religion was certainly intended by its all-wise author; because its evidences are so arranged and modified, that there can be no conviction of its truth without serious inquiry.

Had the Almighty intended to have precluded all discussion of the truths of revelation, he would have rendered its evidence so clear, simple and indisputable, that no two people could have differed on the subject. At present, there are no two people who think precisely alike on all the points of Christianity.

Why has the divine author of revealed religion permitted so vast a multiplicity of opinions on its truth and doctrines? Certainly for the sake of exciting inquiry, and of promoting discussion; for which there would have been neither necessity nor motive, if all men had thought alike on the subject. A complete uniformity of opinions might likewise, by promoting religious indifference, have been injurious to practical piety. The various shades of faith and degrees of conviction which prevail in the world, were likewise probably intended to teach us charity in our opinions, and humility in our judgments. Contented with our own conviction, we are not to

imprecate anathemas on those who are not convinced in the same way.

If there be any to whom the evidences of Christianity may seem insufficient or inconclusive, from their wanting the inclination or the candour to give them a due and sober consideration; are we justified in persecuting them, either for their ignorance or their illiberality? Certainly not.—The genuine meekness of Christianity ought rather to incline us to behold their blindness with compassion, and their errors with forbearance; and to pray that God may open their eyes to see the truth; or may touch their hearts with that conviction of it's importance, as may make them examine it's evidences with seriousness and candour; and which cannot fail, in the end, of impressing their minds with faith in Christ Jesus.

Christians seldom pray with that fervour and sincerity which they ought, for the conversion of unbelievers. They too often condemn them most uncharitably to damnation, without ever breathing a wish to heaven for their conversion to the light of immortality. The blessed Jesus evidently intended, that the conversion of unbelievers should make one of the daily petitions of believing Christians. "Thy kingdom come," is a supplication that Infidelity may vanish, and that the belief and the practical influence of Christianity may

prevail in all the world. But with what sincerity can we utter this petition, while a bitter jealousy is rankling in our hearts; while we ourselves discover none of that mild spirit that was in Jesus, and rather strive to exasperate than to convince the gainsayer?

If Infidelity have any arguments to produce against the truth of revelation, let them be calmly and rationally refuted: but if it can produce nothing but frothy abuse and virulent misrepresentation, the best reply is—that dignified silence and compassion which Jesus himself displayed, when he was rebuked and reviled. Can we follow a better example than that of Jesus?

Falsehood and rancour always counteract themselves. We are all convinced, that neither the fallies of wit, nor the perverseness of malice, can shake the philosophy of Newton. Should we punish the jackdaw for mocking the eagle? Have we any reason to dread, lest the blasphemies of an individual should overturn the religion of the God of nature? The mere supposition is a disgrace to our belief. The scoffs of impiety cannot shake the fabric of heaven\*.

\* The writings of the infidel will not unfrequently be found to do more service than injury to the Christian cause. The frequent assault of the citadel, keeps the garrison awake. The attacks of the infidel, call forth the energies of the faithful,

The Almighty who dispensed his religion to mankind, has, no doubt, provided, in the common order of things, for it's preservation; and it is full as absurd to suppose, that the Infidel can arrest the progress of revealed truth, as that he can stop the flowing of the ocean. The moral world, as well as the natural, has it's peculiar laws; though those of the latter are more open to our observation, because more familiar to our senses.

they excite arguments to strengthen the weak, or to confirm the wavering, which might otherwise never have appeared.

It is a very common, but a very mistaken supposition, that the writings of the French Deists produced that astonishing degree of infidelity that prevailed in France. Those writings were only a subordinate and secondary cause. The primary and essential cause, was the gross and palpable corruptions of the Romish Church. Those corruptions, accumulating for centuries, at last produced a monster that devoured it's mother. The Deistical philosophers might have hastened his birth, but they had no share in his formation. If the Deistical writers had been the essential cause of the declension of Christianity in France, the same cause, still operating, would have prevented it's revival. Christianity would have sunk, to rise no more! But there is the strongest proof, that the corruptions of the church and the clergy, rather than the scoffs of the philosophers, were the cause of the prevailing infidelity in France: for the best informed travellers into that country assure us, that the infidelity itself is declining, now the cause that produced it is no more! The loathsome sensuality, the prostitute venality, and the splendid hypocrisy of the French church and the French clergy have vanished, and the religion of Jesus is be-



Man being constituted a free and rational being, the evidence of revelation was so disposed, as that it might controul his conduct through the medium of his judgment. It was a rule to him, not by constraint but by choice. Hence it's truth was proposed as an object of rational inquiry; and to this inquiry we are prompted by it's connexion, not with a perishable, but an eternal interest; and which, consequently, renders it an object of superior importance to every human consideration.

Those who think that the truth of revelation ought not to be discussed, are by no means it's best friends. It's discussion seems to be an injunction of the Almighty, and designedly rendered necessary, by the very nature of it's proofs; and of this I am firmly convinced, that the more

gaining to appear with more of it's primitive simplicity. It is now probable that Christianity will, in the course of a few years, when the present atrocious tyranny of the directorial ruffians shall have passed away, strike a much deeper root than before into the minds and the affections of the French; that the faith of the people, no longer cheated by the mummery of Popery, but founded on knowledge, will be immovable; and that all the combined powers of Deism will be too feeble to do it any further injury. In this persuasion, as a Christian and a minister of Jesus, I feel a happiness that I cannot express; and I humbly implore the Supreme Disposer that it may not be illusory.—This note was written in March 1798.



it is discussed, the more will it's beauty be unfolded and it's truth be displayed—the more will the love of it's laws and the conviction of it's importance approach to universality. Men ought not to be Christians merely from hearsay or from fashion, but from conviction.—Every Christian should be able to give a reason of the “hope that is in him;” and those who cannot do this, though they may not be Infidels, hardly deserve the appellation of believers.



## P O S T S C R I P T.

WITH that frank ingenuouſneſs which is ſo congenial to a love of truth, and with that energy which a good cauſe always inſpires, I have attempted to vindicate the combined, and (as I humbly think) indiviſible intereſts of revealed religion, of free inquiry and of human happineſs. Inſtead of adminiſtering freſh fuel to that factious rage, and that ſpirit of bitterneſs which is unhappily ſpreading through theſe once-happy kingdoms, I have endeavoured to ſoften the animofities of faction by the precepts of benevolence, and to inſpire even the breſts of bigots with Chriſtian moderation.—If I have contributed only a mite to this great end, it will cheer with many gleams of pleaſure the boſom of one, who, in his way through life, has had much mournful experience of it's viciffitudes; and who can truly aver, that he never heard, without a wiſh to ſooth, the piercing cries of human miſery.

T H E E N D.

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